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Y-Culture and the Challenge of Subculture in Post-Apartheid South Africa

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FSHGEN001

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in African Studies

Faculty of the Humanities

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: [Signature] Date: 05/09/2005
**ABSTRACT**

Y-Culture is the cultural formation that has revolved around YFM since its conception in 1997. Due to its focus on youth and involvement in post-apartheid South African youth culture, it has often been conceived of as a unique subculture. This project attempts to show that although a conception of subculture is good place to begin when thinking about Y-Culture, the notion itself is limiting when considered in the unique context of post-apartheid South Africa. This project unpacks the afore-mentioned in two conducts. The first explores the phenomenon of Y-Culture through four of its facets, each allocated its own discussion chapter; the Zone in Rosebank where the YFM studios are housed and the offices of Yare found; a popular show on YFM, Harambe, of which transcripts were recorded; written articles and fashion editorials found in the magazine YMAG, of which images were scanned and inserted amongst the pages; and garments sold in the affiliated shop, Y-Shoppe, which have been reproduced as printed photographs amongst the pages. The second conduct indicates, through the above four facets, that Y-Culture is more than a youth subculture and hence shows the limits of Dick Hebdige’s theory of phenomenal subculture.

The main research question is, **in what ways does Y-Culture challenge Hebdige’s theory of subculture?** This question is multifarious as Hebdige’s theory of subculture consists of many concepts. Therefore it has been answered with the help of three sub-questions each applied to a discussion chapter (except chapter four as it discusses the history and context of Y-Culture). Chapter five considers the notion of resistance in relation to the Harambe show and answers the question, **in what ways does Y-Culture resist “master narratives of who we are”**? Chapter six relates the notion of syncretism as opposed to hybridity to YMAG, and answers the question, **how does the notion cultural syncretism as preferred to the theory of hybridity play-out in Y-culture?** A reading of style is discussed in relation to particular garments sold at the Y-Shoppe in chapter seven, and hence answers, **in what ways can style in Y-Culture be read?**
What emerged from this list of questions was that firstly the youth who are participants in Y-Culture are so because of their refusal to accept and hence resist "master narratives of who we are" (Nuttall 2004:442) and to do so with an exertion of pride. Secondly, the notion of syncretism, according to Becquer and Gatti, allows for movement between identities imagined to be fixed, which enables contradiction to flourish (1981:447). Emphasis on contradiction is key when considering YMAG because of the various elements it draws on in its portrayal of the areas of interest that South African youth are currently concerned with. Finally when it comes to a reading of Y-Style, the message that gets communicated has to do with the meaning of signs, which are overt. These signs and messages are what defines Y-Style due to its strong ties to the history of this country. This social and political awareness is the hallmark of Y-Style and what makes those who wear it part of Y-Culture.
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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

Why Y?
In this project I will be exploring the cultural formation around the youth radio station YFM, known as Y-Culture (Nuttall 2004). This will be done through four discussion chapters each pertaining to a facet of Y-Culture. These four chapters cover the emergence of the station itself from its beginnings in the suburb of Bertrams in Johannesburg and its move to the Zone shopping complex in the northern suburb of Rosebank; a study of one of their afternoon shows called Harambe; an analysis of the station’s associated magazine YMAG; and a brief account of the clothing shop The Y-Shoppe.

The term Y-Culture has been used when referring to this cultural formation, which is associated with the rise of post-apartheid new youth identities, in accordance with its use in Sarah Nuttall’s paper (Stylizing the Self: The Y-Generation in Rosebank, Johannesburg, 2004). Those who initiated Y-Culture are part of the Y-Generation, who could be described as “generation Yers, children of the 1980’s who are old enough to understand what the political fuss (of the apartheid era) was about, yet young enough to keep an open mind (to the present and the future)” (Nuttall quoting Mtsali 2004:433). Y-Culture then is the cultural space that this generation has carved out for itself in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. It is a very public space invested with socio-political issues and debates around subjects relevant to a post-apartheid climate, such as racial identity, ethnicity, Africanism, as well as subjects predominantly associated with global youth culture such as music, fashion, and style. Y-Culture is the space where all of the aforementioned subjects interconnect and mingle with one another in interesting combinations and formulas. These get reformed and renegotiated on a continuous cycle but also allow for innovative intersections between the global and the local to occur.

1 Nuttall uses this quote in a discussion of ‘Loxion Kulcha’ the fashion label getting its inspiration from township location. The description of “generation Yers is used to describe the founders of the label Wandi Nzimande and Sechaba ‘Chabi’ Mogale (Nuttall 2004:433).
Another important facet of Y-Culture is its strong ties and connections to the socio-political history of this country, which gets reflected on in many ways in this research. These include: the on-air discussions on the Harambe show; the article content and fashion editorials of the magazine; and the images and messages on the garments sold at the Y-Shoppe. It is these intersections of the global and the local, with a strong acknowledgement of the social and political history of this country, that makes Y-Culture an interesting sight of research. Accordingly, Nuttall acknowledges this and calls for a ‘reformulation’ of “the way the local and the global intersect in South Africa to understand the innovative, often still unchartered borderlands in which youth cultures give voice to imaginative worlds very different from those of the parental generation” (2004:432).

There is a strong belief that Y-Culture is a unique phenomenon that defies many categorizations, specifically those pertaining to traditional theories of subculture. This project therefore has a two-folded aim; the first being a descriptive exploration into the phenomenon that is Y-Culture by looking at the above mentioned four facets; and secondly in exploring these facets to illustrate that Y-Culture is much more than a youth subculture. The second aim entails an indication of the limits of subcultural theory as understood by Dick Hebdige.

The Research Problematic

In accordance with title of this project, as well as the above mentioned aims, the main research question is, In what ways does Y-Culture challenge Hebdige’s theory of subculture? This question will be answered in reference to all four of the afore-mentioned facets, which have been allocated their own chapters. Three of them each discuss a relevant research question that pertains to a broad theme emerging from Hebdige’s theory of subculture, namely, resistance, hybridity and style.

According to Hebdige subcultures are the product of subordinated groups who have been “dismissed, denounced and canonized” by the larger society (1979:2). The tension thus created between the subordinated group and the more dominant one gets reflected on
what he calls “the surfaces of subculture”, or “the styles made up of mundane objects which have a double meaning” (1979:2).

This double meaning of objects on the one-hand cautions the broader society of the subculture’s presence, and on the other provides a sense of value and belonging to the members of that subculture by being elevated to iconic status - a sign that they can identify with. Through embracing these symbols or “icons”, which have “secret meanings” only known by the members of the subculture as part of their “style”, these members as a collective group are actually in a process of resistance (1979:18). Accordingly then Hebdige argues that when it comes to subculture, style is subverted, it “goes against nature, interrupting the process of normalization” (1979:18) as an act of resistance to the broader society.

The second relevant point he makes concerning this project is that style in subculture is a ‘hybrid’ process stemming from “a whole range of heterogeneous youth styles” and that this “mix” is relatively unstable, threatening all the elements to return to their “original sources” (1979:25). This discussion of hybridity focuses around the conflation of reggae and rock music, however he goes on to say that this conflation of “heterogeneous youth styles” also filtered through to styles of dress and accessorization with the result being “the phenomenon known as punk” (Hebdige 1979:26).

The final important point of Hebdige’s, which this project is concerned with is subcultural style, where he uses a very appropriate word to describe its impact in everyday life, “noise” (Hebdige 1979:133). He says “I have used the term ‘noise’ to describe the challenge to symbolic order that such styles are seen to constitute” (Hebdige 1979:133). This is a relevant point that the concept of style in subcultures, specifically when it comes to dress and accessorization, is about creating a ‘noise’. However in Hebdige’s understanding this ‘noise’ through style is pursued as a “form of resistance” to a “ruling ideology” (Hebdige 1979:133), which is where his theory limits an understanding of style in Y-Culture. David Muggleton suggests that this is not necessarily true when it comes to post-modern subcultures, that “style is now worn for its
look, not for an underlying message” (Muggleton 2000:44). This means that members of subcultures are not bound to any one specific style rather “they move quickly and freely from one style to another as they wish” (Muggleton 2000:47). Therefore when it comes to postmodern understandings of subcultures and their style, the “noise” is more about expressing individuality as opposed to collective defiant messages.

The three secondary questions which have been formulated to assist in answering the main research question, all relate to the above three emergent points of Hebdige’s general theory of subculture, namely; in what ways does Y-Culture resist “master narratives of who we are” (Nuttall 2004:442)? How does the notion cultural syncretism as preferred to the theory of hybridity play-out in Y-culture? In what ways can style in Y-Culture be read?

These three questions challenge Hebdige’s theory of subculture by drawing on more contemporary concepts (syncretism and master narratives) and theorists (Paul Gilroy, Ted Polhemus, David Muggleton, to name a few). These concepts and theorists are not all bound by subcultural theory but rather are concerned with the bigger debates that run through this project associated with racial identity, youth culture and postmodern critiques of subculture.

Understanding Key Terms

Master narratives have been defined as the social and historically constructed way in which individuals understand their position in society and the world, which shapes their reality (Steyn 2001:xxxviii). In South Africa these master narratives have most commonly been ascribed to notions of race but can also pertain to many notions such as class, gender and age to name a few. When it comes to resisting such narratives, as Nuttall suggests in reference to the Y-Generation, this means that Y-Culture has the potential to transcend and refigure such master narratives. This would be a form of resistance and interrupting “the process of normalization” of which Hebdige mentions in his reference to style. In post-apartheid South Africa, when it comes to identity politics it

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2 See Chapter 2: Literature Review
is exactly this shifting and deconstructing of master narratives, which have significantly shaped this country’s past, that have become evident in many spheres but no more obvious than in the realm of emerging youth cultures.

The term *hybridity* generally refers to the coming together of two elements in the formation of something else. Much has been written on the subject specifically in reference to the notion of post-colonialism, such as Bhabha’s book *The Location of Culture* (1995). When it comes to this notion of hybridity, although an adequate point of departure in attempting to unpack the various elements of YMAG, as a post-apartheid publication aimed at youth, the notion itself comes with a lot of “ideological baggage” (Becquer & Gatti 1997:446). The result is that the theoretical notion of hybridity does not significantly capture a sufficient interpretation of YMAG and its associated Y-Culture but a discussion of this concept is relevant in order to show its limitations when applied to an understanding of Y-Culture.

The so-called “ideological baggage” of which Becquer and Gatti mention is based on the notion that the elements making up the hybrid are ‘pure’, fixed and essential “prior to their hybridization” (Becquer & Gatti 1997:446), and hence implies that the product of hybridization is not pure or authentic. This is problematic when it comes to dealing with YMAG and Y-Culture and raises similar questions around the perceived hybrid nature of subcultures, of which Hebdige proposes, specifically in reference to the punk subculture, where he remarks how it was “the awkward and unsteady confluence of two radically dissimilar languages of reggae and rock” (Hebdige 1979:27). Hebdige’s suggestion implies that hybridity is merely a facet of subculture, however what this research aims to propose is that it is the above mentioned “unsteady confluence” which Hebdige speaks about that is precisely why the notion of syncretism is more favourable to understanding youth cultures especially post-modern youth cultures. David Muggleton’s discussion of post-modernism emphasizes the notion of contradiction, where he suggests that “contradictions in cultural forms are to be expected and appreciated, not automatically and compulsively explained away” (2000:47). “Unsteady confluence” is the condition that characterizes post-apartheid youth identities, where the historically loaded notions of
race, class and popular culture intersect, reform and fragment in interesting ways that may in fact contradict each other.

It is for this reason that the concept of syncretism is more useful in coming to terms with Y-Culture because as Becquer and Gatti have indicated that it is testament to the “permeable boundaries” of elements and questions the fixity of contradictions and complementarities in identities (1997:447). As opposed to hybridity, syncretism does not allow for an “originary fixity” (Becquer & Gatti 1997:447), which is important in understanding Y-Culture, that there is no such thing as drawing on original sources to create something new, nothing is pure when looking at how Y-Culture emerged. Paul Gilroy also employs the notion of syncretism in his discussion of black British cultures, to “have been created from diverse and contradictory elements apprehended through discontinuous histories. They have been formed in a field of force between the poles of under- and overdevelopment, periphery and centre” (1987:218). This allows for an understanding of culture not only as unfixed but also as permeable (Gilroy 1987:217). This is important in attempting to understand Y-Culture because it is an indication of how it moves beyond the general conception of subcultures as hybrid formations as perceived by Dick Hebdige, and allows for contradiction.

Style is the fundamental concept which Hebdige’s theory is based on where he describes it as the “surfaces of subculture”. He sums up his analysis when he says towards the end of his book “I have interpreted subculture as a form of resistance in which experienced contradictions and objections to this ruling ideology are obliquely represented in style” (1979:133). From this it becomes clear that Hebdige understood style as being the vehicle through which to understand the motives of all those who participate in that specific subculture. This is what Ted Polhemus and David Muggleton dispute, specifically Polhemus whose book Style Surfing (1996) understands post-modern youth styles as individualized expressions that do not conform to any rules so as not to be categorized (1996:15-17). Muggleton agrees with this and believes that post-modern youth subcultures cannot be reduced to collective expression when it comes to style because the concept of post-modernity “entails the fragmentation of mass identities” (2000:41).
Youth culture is a category associated with a specific group of people, that is, those who are young, and is the only widely accepted off-shoot of the concept of culture that refers to a specific group of occupants. This is probably due to youth in modern societies being associated with what is new in culture. Another important point is that youth have most notably been associated with future hopes and the progress of modernity (Fornas & Bolin 1995:1) and hence are characterized as the guardians of any existence of culture in the future evident in metaphors such as ‘the leaders of tomorrow’ etc.

Popular culture has traditionally been understood as a deviation from ‘official’ culture and characterized by fun and to a degree anarchy (Boethuis 1995:13-14). The term stems from the emergence of the repeated recurrence of many large festivals in medieval Europe, which blatantly went against accepted norms (Boethuis 1995:14). Popular culture has since been conceived of as exciting, uncontrolled and a potential threat to the seriousness of official ‘high’ culture (Boethuis 1995:22). It therefore becomes clear why it is an area predominantly occupied by the youth and how interconnected the notions of youth culture and popular culture are. This is especially so if one had to consider that popular culture’s deviation from official culture allows for its potential as a site of “points of affiliation, shared desires and investments” between different social groups to occur (Dolby 2001:17).

Mass culture is thought to be a commercialized realm, which according to Hebdige is exactly what subcultures attempted to repudiate (1979:102). Mass culture is constituted by the conventional cultural markers and codes believed to be acceptable amongst broader society. Mass culture could be conceived of as “confirmation of the world-as-it-is” (Frith 1997:165). From this it would seem that this contrasts the previous understanding of popular culture but in fact as Boethuis has remarked, today popular culture has become mass culture (1995:22).

Chapter Outline
Chapter Two: Literature Review, discusses the relevant literature around the subjects concerned with each of the discussion chapters and Hebdige’s theory, as well as the broader debates around theories pertaining to race, youth culture and subculture.

In Chapter Three: Methodology, a description concerning the data collection of this project is undertaken as well as the self-reflexivity of doing research on a subject that I have a vested interest in prior to undertaking it as a field of academic research. This factor has affected this project from when it was first conceptualized, in that being a participant in Y-Culture first, my hope as a researcher was to communicate a clear portrayal as how I understand and experience it, as a white South African youth taking part in a post-apartheid youth culture initially aimed at black contemporaries of my generation. This chapter explores this by looking at the postmodern critique of subcultural theory as described by David Muggleton, who is concerned with theorists of Hebdige’s inclination who conducted their research through the Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University in the 1970’s (Muggleton 2000:3).

The first of the four discussion chapters, Chapter 4: A History of Y, doesn’t answer a specific research question, rather it sets the context for the upcoming chapters by accounting for the history of YFM. It looks at the reasons and implications of the station’s move from the suburb of Bertrams southeast of Johannesburg to the middleclass (historically white) neighbourhood of Rosebank.

Chapter Five: YFM, considers the notion of resistance not as something antagonistic to the accepted norms of society, as understood by Hebdige (1979:2) but rather aims to unpack the notion of resistance as an assertion of pride in reference to Nuttall’s quote “resisting master narratives of ‘who we are’” (2004:442). This is done by considering one of the station’s popular afternoon shows, Harambe, recorded during South African Music Week 2003. This chapter indicates how the resistance of master narratives is played out in two ways the first deals with the relationship between issues pertaining to seriousness and those of a more frivolous nature in the on-air dialogue between the DJ’s. The second way in which master narratives are resisted is by considering the two main
musical genres played on the show during this week, kwainto and hip-hop, as well as the relationship between them.

Chapter Six: YMAG, deals with the limits of the notion of hybridity and attempts to show that an understanding of Y-Culture as syncretic is more appropriate in coming to terms with post-apartheid youth identities. The notion of syncretism is more favourable to an understanding of Y-Culture because it emphasizes the vast and different resources that the participants of Y-Culture draw on in the construction of their identities. This is important because the conflation of what may seem to be contradictory resources, continuously produces new meanings, which highlights fluidity and the movement in this process of identity construction. This is done by considering some written articles as well as some fashion editorial photographs in the magazines published between December 2002 and January 2004.

Chapter Seven: Y-Shoppe, is concerned with Y-Style as expressed by the garments sold at the Y-Shoppe. This chapter considers the notion of style and how it can be interpreted as an expression of Y-Culture in reference to photographs taken of garments sold there. The suggestion is both that the garments are worn not only because they contain images and messages that reflect a strong awareness to the broader socio-political context and history of South Africa but also because these garments are very fashionable and reflect global fashion trends. This is important because as mentioned earlier Muggleton suggests that when it comes to postmodern subcultures “style is now worn for its look, not for an underlying message” (Muggleton 2000:44). However when it comes to Y-Culture the suggestion in this chapter is that the message is in fact the look, that the garments sold at the Y-Shoppe and the strong socio-political messages which they communicate, have come to play an important part in the way the Y-Generation construct their style.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion, brings all the findings from the discussion chapters together, as well as my concluding remarks about researching Y-Culture.
CHAPTER TWO:
LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is going to be thematically divided into six main categories each pertaining to a relevant theme that concerns the discussion chapters in this project (chapters 4, 5, 6, 7). As mentioned in the introduction, each of these chapters asks a question that relates to the main research question. Each of these sub-questions pertains to a specific theme, namely, resistance, syncretism and style. The common threads that run through all four discussion chapters are the broader social theories regarding subculture, race, and youth culture. As a result this literature review is divided into two parts; the first discussing the more nuanced themes that relate to each chapter, namely, syncretism, style and resistance; and the second will be concerned with the broader and much written about social theories of subculture, race and youth culture.

The point of intersection of these two groups of themes concerns that of resistance and subculture. This is because the former is a fundamental concept of subcultural theory. However most of the theory around subculture deals with resistance as a question of style where as in this paper resistance is not only about style, as chapter seven indicates, but that it is also articulated more covertly, as discussed in chapter five.

Syncretism

As mentioned in the introduction the concept of syncretism has been employed in this project in a way that picks up where that of hybridity has left off. May Joseph and Jennifer Fink indicate this in their book entitled Performing Hybridity (1999), which is divided into two sections, the first looking at the meaning of hybridity in different parts of the world and the second section looks at how hybridity becomes a way to innovate and create “personal and communal self-fashioning” (1999:21).

In terms of this project their most enduring point lies in the notion of “new hybrid identities”, which they understand in two ways. The first embodies a contradiction that is
its defining characteristic “the reiteration of the conceptions of the state and nationness, while simultaneously catalyzing movements within the state against the consolidation of a singular ethnicity” (Joseph 1999:4). This is important when considering Y-Culture because it will become clear that although an expression of a new South African youth identity is fore grounded, it acknowledges and prioritizes that this is not a singular entity. This is not exclusively due to the various ethnicities of the youth of South Africa but more so due to the various fluid intersections of race, class, language and style.

Secondly, the authors speak of “new hybrid identities” as being fore grounded by modernization and development and are in fact “new secular identities that are spawned by the globalizing tendencies through which they are mediated” (Joseph 1999:8). This factor of globalizing tendencies is one of the premises of the argument made in chapter six regarding these “new hybrid identities” but more so the preference of syncretism over hybridity as a theoretical tool when considering YMAG and Y-Culture. These globalizing tendencies regarding the hybridization of cultures are fundamental to Homi Bhabha’s theory of hybridity discussed in his book The Location of Culture (1994).

Although syncretism has been used primarily to refer to “religious fusions or traditional symbolic fusions” (Garcia Canclina 1990:11), Marcos Bequer and Jose Gatti write about the preference of the notion of syncretism over that of hybridity in their paper Elements of Vogue, (first published in 1991) in The Subcultural Reader (1997). This is because they believe that the notion of hybridity has “ideological baggage” that has not been critically looked at (1997:446). This “baggage” stems from its literal meaning of pure fixed identities “prior to their hybridization” (1997:446). Syncretism, according to the authors, emphasizes the permeable boundaries between identities as well as allowing contradiction to flourish as much as consistency in and amongst identities presumed fixed (1997:447). This is important in considering Y-Culture because it will become clear that the Y-Generation occupy a space rife with contradictions that allows for innovation and creativity when it comes to an assertion of post-apartheid youth identities.

Style
In most subcultural research style of dress has tended to be the focus, as Ted Polhemus writes, “the last fifty years and amongst the young, the rise of subcultures… has reasserted the role of appearance style as a marker of group membership” (Polhemus 1996:15). However his book contests this by suggesting that in the current post-modern era style is becoming increasingly difficult to read because of the complex messages in the appearance of individuals’ styles—“a complexity that makes written ‘translations’ of such messages either impossible or an exercise in absurdity” (1996:15).

His book is entitled *Style Surfing: What to Wear in the 3rd Millenium* (1996), and it attempts to prove exactly this, that style is something individuals draw on from many sources, which can often be contradictory ones. This element of contradiction and confusion is not contested, in fact quite the opposite, it is valued because according to Polhemus, a characteristic of the post-modern is contradiction and that when it comes to style and fashion “we are all breaking the rules… deliberately sending out confusing, even contradictory signals” (1996:17). The importance of this is to defy classification and categorization but also to avoid being stereotyped (Polhemus 1996:17). This is important because if one looks at subcultural research since the 70’s, it has tended to do exactly this, categorize groups of individuals and hence create a stereotype, such as Hebdige’s theory on punks.

Mpolokeng Bogatsu also writes about style but in the context of the Y-Generation. The paper is entitled ‘Lexion Kulcha: Fashioning Black Youth Culture in Post-apartheid South Africa’ (2003). In this insightful essay the author discusses the clothing label Lexion Kulcha with specific emphasis on two designs from one of the label’s ranges “namely the LK-branded overalls and the distinctive LK men’s suit” (2003:2). The point of which was to “demonstrate how these designers have turned to South African clothing idioms of the past while combining these with contemporary global references and styles” (2003:2).

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3 It is for this reason that I have chosen to discuss much of the literature on subcultural style under the section in this chapter entitled Subculture.
The significance of this paper is that besides from making continuous reference to the style of the Y-Generation and Y-Culture and their association with YFM, Bogatsu also emphasizes the importance of connections to this country’s politically charged history when it comes to the style of the Loxion Kulcha label and of the Y-Generation, “the use of stylistic registers from the past represents an attempt to grapple with persistent social contradictions common to both periods, namely the era from which the idioms are drawn and the present in which the LK (Loxion Kulcha) range takes shape” (2003:2). This is important in understanding how the Y-Generation style themselves because it is an “invocation of older idioms” in “an attempt to play with and ‘remix’ historical discourses” (Bogatsu 2003:2). The result of this in terms of an understanding of Y-Style, according to Bogatsu, is that like the Loxion Kulcha range, the Y-Generation “resituates these older discourses, both freeing them of older and more rigid meanings and investing them with new ones that recognize the persistent social contradictions to which these discourses have reference” (2003:2).

Resistance
The notion of resistance is important to many theories regarding subculture, in light of this thesis the notion is communicated best in the realm of YFM, specifically the show Harambe.

Henry Giroux speaks about the potential of radio to educate, in his book *Fugitive Cultures* (1996), where he says that “postmodern radio politics” favours a “politics of harshness” as opposed to one of compassion (1996:146). He emphasizes that radio specifically that of a more discursive nature (talk radio) is more prone to notions of resistance because of “the unrehearsed nature of talk, it is more open to speaking the unspeakable” and because of “the often spontaneous nature of its content” (1996:151). He then goes on to say how this medium is ideally appealing to the youth because they are more open to “a visual and aural culture than to the culture of the book” (1996:150).

Stanley Cohen also considers the notion of resistance in light of different and emerging theories in his *Symbols of Trouble* (1980), where he says that subculture was “a poliical
battleground between the classes” (1997:150). He goes on to say that most youth delinquency and resistance is the same and have “never had much to do with those historical ‘moments’ and ‘conjunctures’ which today’s students of working-class youth cultures are so ingenuously trying to find” (1997:150). This is interesting when considering Y-Culture because it was precisely the historical moment of democratic freedom that allowed it to emerge. However Y-Culture is not a typical youth subculture and the form of delinquency and resistance that it communicates is a lot more covert than those of which Cohen is referring to.

The notion of resistance grounds Dick Hebdige’s theory of the punk subculture evident in his book *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979). Hebdige understands resistance as communication through style and in terms of this thesis I have primarily discussed the notion of resistance in chapter five, dealing with YFM and the on-air radio discourse. Chapter seven does relate the notion of resistance to an understanding of Y-Style but it is not fully explored there because as Muggleton suggests that the notion of resistance is no longer applicable to post-modern subcultural style, “perhaps the very concept of subculture is becoming less applicable in post-modernity, for the breakdown of mass society has ensured that there is no longer a coherent dominant culture against which a subculture can express its resistance... if modernist subcultures were defined in terms of a series of theoretical oppositions to non-subcultural style, then postmodernity dissolves such distinctions” (Muggleton 2000:48).

**Subculture**

Hebdige continuously refers to three themes throughout his book, which all relate to the notion of resistance, “the status and meaning of revolt, the idea of style as a form of Refusal, the elevation of crime into art” (Hebdige 1979:2). These themes are taken from Jean Genet’s book *The Thief’s Journal* (1967) and are where Hebdige’s understanding of subculture as a form of resistance is drawn from. All three of these themes have an element of resistance in them, which is why the demarcated line between treating the notions of resistance and subculture as separate becomes unclear.
According to Hebdige subcultures are the product of subordinated groups who have been “dismissed, denounced and canonized” by the larger society (1979:2). The tension thus created between the subordinated group and the more dominant one gets reflected on what he calls “the surfaces of subculture”, or “the styles made up of mundane objects which have a double meaning” (1979:2).

This double meaning of objects on the one-hand cautions the broader society of the subculture’s presence, “they warn the ‘straight’ world ‘in advance of a sinister presence-the presence of difference’” (1979:2). On the other hand this double meaning provides a sense of value and belonging to the members of that subculture as valued signs of “forbidden identity” being elevated to iconic status- a sign that they can identify with (Hebdige 1979:2-3). Through embracing these symbols or “icons”, which have “secret meanings” only known by the members of the subculture as part of their ‘style’, these members as a collective group are actually in a process of resistance (1979:18). Accordingly then Hebdige argues that when it comes to subculture, style is subverted, it “goes against nature, interrupting the process of normalization” (1979:18) as an act of resistance to the broader society.

Another important point he makes regarding subcultural style is in his use of the very appropriate word to describe its impact in everyday life, “noise” (Hebdige 1979:133). He says “I have used the term ‘noise’ to describe the challenge to symbolic order that such styles are seen to constitute” (Hebdige 1979:133). This is a relevant point, that the concept of style in subcultures, specifically when it comes to dress and accessorization, is about creating a ‘noise’. However in Hebdige’s understanding this ‘noise’ through style is pursued as a “form of resistance” to a “ruling ideology” (Hebdige 1979:133), which is where his theory limits an understanding of style in Y-Culture.

Much has been written critiquing subcultural theory of Hebdige and other sociologists from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham (CCCS), such as David Muggleton’s critical book Inside Subculture: The Post-Modern Meaning of Style (2000), where he draws out the vast differences of subcultural research in post-modernity.
to that of modernist tendencies of the CCCS (2000:3). He says the biggest flaw in most subcultural research, affiliated with the CCCS, is “their failure to take seriously enough the subjective viewpoints of the youth subculturalists themselves” (2000:3). He suggests that today many young sociology scholars are researching cultures in the realm of the popular of that they are themselves a part of, which is “producing a new cohort of academic taste-makers for whom the deficiencies of established theories are likely to be thrown into sharp relief by their own personal experiences” (Muggleton 2000:4).

Another important point he makes regarding post-modern subcultural style, which is a direct challenge to Hebdige’s theory, is that “style is now worn for its look, not for an underlying message” (Muggleton 2000:44). This means that members of subcultures are not bound to any one specific style rather “they move quickly and freely from one style to another as they wish” (Muggleton 2000:47). Therefore when it comes to post-modern understandings of subcultures and their style the “noise”, which Hebdige refers to above, is more about expressing individuality as opposed to resisting collective messages.

Gary Clarke also critiques much subcultural research of the CCCS at Birmingham university in his Defending Ski-Jumpers (1981), where he says subcultures have been perceived as “collective solutions to collective problems” (1997:175), but that such a perception makes them static and essentialist and cannot explain why people move in and out of various subcultures (1997:176).

Carine Zaayman, in her paper Riding a Different Wave: Digital Media and Subcultural Expression speaks about digital subcultures, particularly dealing with those that have emerged in post-apartheid South Africa, such as Sub_UrbanMagazine. She says that such subcultural formations, being reflected in a visual form, allows not only a language to be communicated “but also delimits its membership and writes its identity” (Zaayman 2005:156). This emphasizes the freedom of membership and fluidity of such a marker.

Youth Culture
The most influential piece of writing regarding this thesis dealing with the subject of post-apartheid youth culture, is a research article written by Sarah Nuttall entitled, *Stylizing the Self: The Y Generation in Rosebank, Johannesburg* (2004). The significance of this work is that it shows the emergence of a cultural formation around YFM. In the article she has defined this formation as Y-Culture “a new city youth culture… centred in Rosebank, Johannesburg, but stretching well beyond this trendy affluent and increasingly racially mixed suburb” (2004:432). The second term that she employs, which is used simultaneously with Y-Culture and illustrates its far-reaching appeal, is the Y-Generation. This term is used to refer to the generation of children born in the 1980’s who were children and teenagers when this country underwent its first democratic elections (2004:433).

The importance of this generation, according to Nuttall is that unlike the generations that came before them they are involved in a resistance politics that is very different from those of past generations, as it is not exclusively focused on race but also on class, ethnicity, and what she has called the “remixing” of “cultural codes and signifiers from the past” (2004:436). The message one gets from this is an assertion of pride and the “confidence of a free black youth” (2004:443) who are able to draw on many sources, locally and globally, past and present, in the artful construction of their identities and styles (2004:438), which go against the perceived “master narratives” of who they are (2004:442). It is from this understanding that one can see how post-apartheid youth identities are continuously engaged with a politics of resistance that is not exclusively style related, as much subcultural theory has stipulated, but also concerns how this generation of youths choose to inhabit other areas of popular culture in the process of forming and reforming their identities.

The book entitled *Constructing Race: Youth, Identity and Popular Culture* (2001), written by Nadine Dolby, discusses many similar themes as Nuttall’s essay except it is not focused on Y-Culture but rather on the emerging post-apartheid youth identities in one of the first multi-racial schools in Durban, Fernwood High. The book deals with shifting understandings of racial identity pertaining to the same generation of children
born in the 1980’s, of which Nuttali makes reference to in the above paragraph. She emphasizes their liminal position of being “a generation whose past, present and future are neither completely defined by apartheid, nor completely free of it” (2001:7).

The entire book focuses on how these school children reconceptualize meanings attached to race in a post-1994 climate, in the realm of popular culture, “youth at Fernwood do not look solely to the past, to the remnants of apartheid, to develop and define their identities. ‘Race’ after apartheid is not simply a matter of discarding or embracing already formed racial positions but of renegotiating it in a new context” (2001:8).

The global arena of popular culture is where this reconceptualization of race is able to occur, according to Dolby, and the translation of this into local contexts comes in the form of “border-crossing” (2001:96-97). She elaborates on this by saying that, “global popular culture works in concert with local conditions to create temporary points of affiliation, shared desires, and investments, which allow alliances to develop between particular individuals or racial groups in the school... Global flows are critical to understanding identity formation and political struggle at Fernwood, as global popular culture becomes the way that students actively engage race” (Dolby 2001:17).

The aspects of popular culture that Dolby is most concerned with in this book are fashion and music, which are both important in understanding Y-Culture. Sandra Klopper also emphasizes the importance of global popular culture in the construction of post-apartheid youth identities in her paper From Japan to Jamaica: Reframing Youth Identities in Contemporary South Africa (2005).

When it comes to music probably the most significant youth cultural phenomenon to catch-on globally is the genre of hip-hop. The staunch purveyors will argue that it is in fact a lifestyle, “the culture from which rap emerged, a lifestyle with its own language style of dress, music and mind-set” (Lopiano-Misdom & De Luca 1996:36). It is for this reason that I have chosen to discuss this genre of music under the section of youth culture, specifically in reference to Y-Culture. It will become clear that this ‘lifestyle’ has
been able to emerge in the context of post-apartheid South Africa in a way that enables Y-Culture to occupy a fluid and complex space between global and local understandings of youth culture. In the book Street Trends (1996) the authors refer to hip-hop as appealing to youth from different racial and ethnic backgrounds “because it was different” but also because “its pioneers and soldiers were young. They were rebellious… They represented power, success and individual creativity” (Lopiano-Misdom & De Luca 1996:36).

Patrick Neate also tries to understand the universal appeal of hip-hop in his book entitled Where You’re At: Journey’s From the Frontline of a Hip-Hop Planet (2003). It is an autobiographical journal documenting the hip-hop movement in five cities around the world with his aim to find the ‘magic’ of the genre or more so the essence of it, as he writes, “but, for me, when I started working on this book, the essence of hip-hop had always been something intuitive and visceral; an inexplicable concept that sat on the very tip of the tip of my tongue” (Neate 2003:5). Half way through the book he comes to the revelation, whilst driving through Johannesburg, the economic hub of South Africa and Africa, that everything he has ever believed hip-hop to stand for is actually very much more elusive and abstract, “Perhaps here, hip-hop can be a forum for reconciling seemingly conflicting definitions of who you are and that is necessarily an imaginative and associative process rather than an exact science” (Neate 2003:93).

Neate then manages to show that hip-hop really has become a global phenomenon and the significance of this is that the essence, he is so desperate to find, is not a singular universal one but rather exists in each unique place he visited with their very own histories, interpretations and incarnations, “hip-hop is a globalized medium that is locally adapted to articulate local concerns… But it is also a source of potent and abstract symbolism” (Neate 2003:96). It is for this reason that South African hip-hop is sharing and perhaps dominating the spotlight with Kwaito in reference to Y-Culture because

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4 The fact that out of the five cities in the world Neate chooses to explore in his attempt to discover the essence of Hip-Hop, Johannesburg and Cape Town are two of them, which goes to show the vast following Hip-Hop has in this country.
although both genres are local inventions, hip-hop generally is a global phenomenon that has a hold on youth cultures the world over.

Adam Haupt and Lianne Loots both have published articles in the journal *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* (2003, no.57) dealing with hip-hop. Haupt’s article *Hip-Hop, Gender and Agency in the Age of Empire* (2003), discusses the ways in which hip-hop can be used as a tool to confront critically and creatively “the realities of marginalised subjects” (2003:21). Loots’ article, *Being a ‘Bitch’: Some questions on the gendered globalization and consumption of American hip-hop urban culture in post-apartheid South Africa* (2003), explores how features of urban popular culture originating in America, particularly hip-hop, are appropriated by “the South” (2003:65) in ways that deem them superior. Her discussion specifically focuses on sexist and gendered messages of “Northern hip-hop culture” (2003:65).

Lara Allen’s article entitled *Kwaito versus Crossed-over: Music and Identity during South Africa’s Rainbow Years, 1994-99* (2004), also speaks about the importance of music in the landscape of South African popular culture. She makes reference to Y-Culture and YFM where she discusses the relationship between Y-Culture and Kwaito, “largely comprising black urban youth who patronise kwaito and Africanised hip-hop, house, R&B and rap, the Y-Generation coalesced around the Johannesburg based regional radio station YFM that was launched in 1997” (2004:83-84). The significance of this article is that Allen indicates how Kwaito helped in the establishment of urban black youth identities, “in the immediate post-apartheid years young urban black South Africans were primarily intent on establishing an identity that marked them off from previous generations, and on voicing the experience of freedom for themselves” (2004:84).

Simon Stephens’ article, *Kwaito* (2000) also goes into the details of how the genre emerged in the immediate post-apartheid climate of the early to mid-nineties. He also goes into details about what the genre actually is and interviewed students at the University of Natal in Durban in 1996 on their perceptions of it (2000:263).
Race

Paul Gilroy has written extensively around issues of blackness in the African diaspora, (*There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack* - 1991, *Diaspora, Utopia and the Critique of Capitalism* - 1987, *Between Camps* - 2000, *After Empire* - 2004). Although his work is primarily concerned with the notion of blackness and black identity he also speaks about some of the above subjects such as resistance and syncretism, where he says “Black oppressive cultures affirm while they protest. The assimilation of blacks is not a process of acculturation but of cultural syncretism” (Gilroy 1987:340).

In all of the above mentioned works a key theme that concerns all of them is that of multiculturalism, however in terms of this thesis Gilroy’s most enduring and related points are the glamourization of blackness and “new racism” (2000:27). In his book *Between Camps*, with regards to the first, he says that consumer culture is becoming more depoliticized and racialized appearances are changing, the result is an “easily commodified exotica which reflects a “racialized glamour” that is non-specific and abstract (2000:21). He goes on to say that although glamourized, these racialized bodies do not change the already entrenched everyday racial hierarchy, because although having a “rich visual culture that allows blackness to be beautiful” also emphasizes that the body can no longer “hold the boundaries of racial difference in place” (2000:22). The result is that although bodies might still be the most obvious way to fix race socially, nowadays black bodies are being seen, portrayed and imagined differently (2000:23).

This is where his second important point emerges, namely that “new racism” is less about the body and more about culture (Gilroy 2000:24). This is because in today’s fast globalizing world, cultural continuity and border crossing between different racialized groups has resulted in only the smallest of cultural nuances that have become the only
markers of difference. Culture then becomes the emphasis because the certainties of race are in fact not certain at all (2000:24).

The notion of master narratives in the articulation of racial identity is what concerns Melissa Steyn’s book *Whiteness Just Isn’t What it Used to Be: White Identity in a Changing South Africa* (2001). In it she defines the meaning of master narratives and shows how important they have been in maintaining the notion of whiteness in South Africa, “Narratives in this sense are historical social constructions that provide a frame of interpretation through which we make sense of the world and our place in it, and thus constitute our sense of reality. They are the coherent systems of meaning we construct to explain, legitimate, and guide our actions in the world” (Steyn 2001:xxxviii).

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5 This is interesting because Nuttall says the opposite, according to her paper on the Y-Generation she says that “at times, skin is said to be the only means for ‘telling the difference’ between young people who inhabit crossover cultures” (2004:45).
CHAPTER THREE:
METHODOLOGY:
DOCUMENTING Y-CULTURE

This chapter will describe the ways in which the data for this project was collected and will consist of two sections. The first section has a double-function, namely it discusses the theoretical issues of the research methods in light of my understanding of Y-Culture, which is then a self-reflexive explanation of where I stand in relation to this research. Usually this ‘disclaimer’ section of self-reflexivity would be found in the introduction chapters of research projects, however I have chosen to discuss it in the methodology chapter of this project because fundamentally my interest in Y-Culture is not exclusively academic. Before I decided to embark on this research I participated in Y-Culture by purchasing the magazine and listening to the station whenever possible (accessible through Channel 60 on DSTV’s audio bouquet music channels)\(^1\). The second section concerns the methods in data collection pertaining to the four description chapters- YFM, YMAG, The Zone, and Y-SHOPPE- as well as the interviews I conducted. I have chosen to discuss them in this order, as this is the sequence in which the relative data was collected.

Y-Culture and Me
Although Y-Culture is centralized at the Zone shopping complex, in Rosebank, Johannesburg, through the above-mentioned means anyone in the country and the continent can access it. I was pleasantly surprised to realize that I was not alone in my ‘dislocated’ position of not living in Johannesburg but yet being able to receive Y-Culture, as many of the letters to YMAG indicate, “YFM, I reckon it should be available to the whole country. I live in KZN and every time I’m in Jozi, I make sure I listen to YFM as much as possible. Before I know it I have to go home and keep myself happy

\(^1\) This allows YFM to be broadcast to the rest of South Africa and the continent but only to those who are able to pay for DSTV monthly subscriptions.
with just the right dose of YMAG. Please make it nationwide!” (YMAG Feb/Mar 2003, Vol.5, Issue 43:11).

When I first decided to research YFM in 2003, I did so because as well as being interested in it as a phenomenon of South African popular culture, I realised that as a field of research it complied with the post-colonial discourses and rhetoric of the graduate department I was involved in, namely the Centre for African Studies. The challenge then became to intellectualise a phenomenon that I take part in as being young and concerned with all trends, globally and locally. This was a challenge compounded by the post-apartheid context, which I found myself in as a young person struggling with her own issues of identity.

The struggle had to do with occupying a still privileged position of post-apartheid whiteness, and feeling drawn to the emerging youth culture initiated by my black contemporaries. Initially my interest in researching Y-Culture did pertain to issues of racial identity, specifically around questions of my own racial identity, being white and yet finding that YFM and YMAG appealed to me although I did not fall into their ideal target audience at the time. This changed as my archive of data grew both from the field of research (the magazine, Y-Shoppe, the Zone), the interviews I had with some who worked there and from the literature I read2. My experience of Y-Culture began to depart from a primary focus on race and more towards an experience of youth in a post-apartheid context as well as the experience of what on the surface may seem to be “spectacular subculture” (Hebdige 1979). I have come to realize that it is a context where race is just one of the conflating elements of this experience in South Africa today.

Factors Pertaining to Post-modern Ethnography

When reading the relevant literature regarding subcultural research and ethnography the notion of impartiality became very pertinent i.e. in conducting qualitative research, especially when it involves ethnographic data collection, it is crucial for the researcher to

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2 Sarah Nuttall’s article, Stylizing the Self: The Y-Generation in Rosebank Johannesburg (2004), was particularly inspiring, as it was the first piece of academic literature I had read concerning Y-Culture.
remain neutral towards the field they are studying. However Clifford Geertz warns against this in his book, *Work and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author* (1988), by saying it can become easy for the ethnographer to “swallow” those s/he is researching (1988:14). What Geertz implies here and what his entire book suggests, which of course is the ideal, is a balance of these two—being familiar yet remaining critically distant (1988:16).

Striking this balance is more often than not unrealistic as there are various factors (in fact they are endless) that come into play when conducting field-research. One of them is the element of surprise, of which Paul Willis mentions, namely, “that of being surprised, of reaching knowledge not prefigured in one’s starting paradigm” (1997:248). Willis explains that this ‘surprise’ element is based on the ‘rawness’ of the data i.e. it being received in the “experimental and relatively untheorized manner” and therefore allowing the hypotheses and views to arise independently (1997:246). In terms of this research, the field and archive were very familiar to me, even the results were to a degree lacking in this element of surprise discussed above, which is why I embarked on researching Y-Culture—it was something I felt I could write about credibly as being a participant of it. Having said that however it made the task of remaining critically distant difficult to maintain, which became part of the greater challenge of this project.

This is where the term ‘participant observation’ became problematic for me as a researcher; conducting research that has an ethnographic element to it (documenting the Zone in Rosebank, photographing the garments in the Y-Shoppe, and conducting interviews with some of the employees at Y) but also a textual analytic one (analysing the tapes recorded from YFM and the magazines). The meaning of ‘participant observation’ therefore came to reveal something new. If as Willis proposes, participant observation entails the researcher working “in the environment of his/her subjects rather than in the laboratory and is to enter the field as free as possible from prior theory” (Willis 1997:247), then this research did not involve the method of participant observation on my part.
This is because of two reasons. The first as mentioned earlier, being “the environment” referred to by Willis, which suggests an unfamiliarity and strangeness to the researcher but in the context of this research “the environment” was not unknown to me. The second, has to do with intellectualising, or rather recording in an academic format, a phenomenon of popular culture that I am able to access in my everyday life. This is virtually impossible to do so without already having preconceived hypotheses or theories, whether they are political, academic or not. Therefore the term ‘participant observation’ itself highlights the tensions of my position, namely being an active participant but having to observe critically as James Clifford suggests “making the familiar strange” (1986:2). This translates into being a genuine player in Y-Culture by enjoying it as a space of recreation yet having to withdraw myself from it as such and observe it critically and thereby engaging with it more seriously. This is where my role as a researcher researching a youth culture that I had a lot of personal investment in, became difficult. This was due to the task of writing academically and critically about subjects still considered trivial to a degree such as shopping, music, parties and gossip.

Considering that this research is composed of various data collection methods (textual analysis and ethnography), as well as being conducted by someone who participates in the cultural form, it could then be considered along the lines of what Stephen Tyler has called “post-modern ethnography” i.e. “an evolved text consisting of fragments of discourse intended to evoke in the minds of both reader and writer an emergent fantasy of a possible work of communication” (Tyler 1997:254). This notion of ‘fantasy as communication’ is important for me in taking responsibility for this project, in that the discussions emerging in these chapters, are perhaps my fantasy of Y-Culture which are most likely very different from what others (participants of Y-Culture or not) have to say about it. This is a constructed ‘fantasy’ that has been made with all my personal issues pertaining to academic theory and my social position of being brought-up white in a post-apartheid context and part of what has been termed Generation Y. Zaayman describes this generation as “succeeding Generation X, whose lack of ambition and direction was the result of a bleak outlook, Generation Y refers to the group born between 1980 and 1995.
They are inundated with primarily two things, namely digital/computer technology and an increasingly consumer-orientated world" (Zaayman 2005:174).

It is this above relation that I have described, between my subject of study and myself, which according to George E. Marcus is where the “macro-micro integration” can be handled (Marcus 1986:193). This means, that in the commentary of the difficulties of doing ethnography, text references to the broader world, which the ethnographer and their subject share, gets embedded in the text (Marcus 1986:193).

The notion of a constructed text is one which James Clifford elaborates on, namely the “focus on text making” i.e. that all ethnographic texts are “caught up in the invention, not the representation of cultures” (1986:2). It is from this important point that one can begin to understand Tyler’s notion of “post-modern ethnography” (1997:254) that it is an invention of a culture in a very specific historical context, which tells as much about the ethnographer as it does about the culture or cultural formation under study. In this project this is all the more compounded by my admission of being a participant of Y-Culture.

Arguably, I do feel the importance of being part of Y-Culture is imperative to truly understanding it, which involves many complex intricacies that only those who have experienced them have the potential to express. David Muggleton expresses the importance of young academics researching certain areas of popular culture, such as subcultural forms, of which they actively partake in “prior to intellectual engagement with it” because it produces “a new cohort of academic taste-makers for whom the deficiencies of established theories are likely to be thrown into sharp relief by their own personal experiences… perhaps their subsequent critiques can be understood as a need to satisfy what Andy Medhurst has referred to as ‘the urge to shout- no, I know more about it than you, because I was there’” (Muggleton 2000:4).

When it comes to research pertaining to emerging youth cultures and subcultures in post-apartheid South Africa, I believe I have this potential, which is limited in some areas such as being white and not speaking an African language (other than minimal bits of Afrikaans), but in others it is not, like being young and part of Generation Y. The frustration fuelling the ‘urge’ of what Andy Medhurst refers to above is the same one I feel when I began reading literature regarding subculture in an attempt to theorize this project. This was for two specific reasons, firstly that well respected readings of spectacular subculture especially that of Dick Hebdige’s book *Subculture the Meaning of Style* seem to be dated, when considering Y-Culture, and secondly, the book was written by someone not part of the subculture who relied on “big theories” as opposed to the subjective experiences of those within the subculture in the composition of this book (Muggleton 2000:3). According to Muggleton this is the fundamental flaw in Hebdige’s work because this portrayed “those involved in subcultures as passive pawns of history, their lives shaped by grand narratives beyond their control” (Muggleton 2000:3).

**Collecting the Data**

In order to capture the full scope of Y-Culture I decided that the most effective way to do so would be to consider some of the elements that contribute to its growing appeal and popularity, namely YFM, YMAG, the Zone in Rosebank and the Y-Shoppe. By focusing on these four I hope this research clearly illustrates that Y-Culture in many ways seems to be antagonistic to much of the theory regarding subculture written by Hebdige, which would illustrate how static the often perceived ‘groundbreaking’ book of Hebdige’s is in terms of a theoretical approach of subculture to Y-Culture. The only way to show this stasis is to show how multifarious and nuanced an experience of Y-Culture is by drawing on the tapes recorded from the radio station YFM, the articles and fashion editorials in the magazine YMAG, the experience of being in the Zone in Rosebank as an ‘ethnographer’ as well as a consumer, and the style and messages of the clothes in the Y-Shoppe.

The methods for data collection are varied and together my hope is that they communicate the intricacies and complexities of a youth culture emerging in the post-
apartheid period of this country which would show the limits of subcultural analysis. These methods themselves reflect an important theoretical theme of this project, namely syncretism, as an extension of the notion of hybridity. This is an important concept to understanding the methodologies used in this project, as Becqucr and Gatti mention, “Syncretism points to the tactical articulation of different elements” (1997:447). By employing various data collection techniques I hoped to systematically communicate the different elements of Y-Culture. It must also be remembered that these are only four which I felt were the most crucial at the time of doing this research, however there are others which have not been considered, such as their website, Y-World, www.yworld.co.za (they also have an internet service provider), their sound engineering studio, Y-Lab, and their social outreach facility called Y-Cares.

YFM
This phase of the data collection process was done in 2003, by recording a radio show called Harambe for one week from the 25-29th of September. This week was South African Music Week and as a result the recorded CD’s play exclusively South African produced music. This was important to understanding the role music plays in the lives of participants of Y-Culture and what this means for post-apartheid youth identities. Popular music provides an important insight into any research archive that has subcultural tendencies because so much time, money and energy is invested in it by both those who listen to it and those who produce it. In the case of Hebdige’s work it was the genre of punk that was the focus, in this project it is the genres of kwaito and hip-hop that are discussed.

I recorded the weeks worth of shows via DSTV channel 60 on the Audio Bouquet by means of mini-disc-recorder, I then converted this data onto a readable CD format of which I’ve decided to look at only one show (Tuesday 26 September 2003) as each show is four hours in length. It is suggested that one listen to the attached CD’s when considering chapter five. Sections of the recorded show have been sampled and transcribed as Appendices 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, of which parts have been inserted into the
discussion chapter concerning YFM. These parts are identifiable in the text of chapter five, as their font is smaller and they have been indented.

**YMAG**

As already mentioned I am an avid reader of YMAG. It is published bi-monthly and I started buying them regularly from the middle of 2003. When I began to conceptualize this project I set about trying to get as many back editions as possible and contacted the Y offices who gladly assisted me in my task by sending me the relevant issues I was missing via post. These together with the editions I already had totalled twenty-two consecutive editions, beginning with the April/May 2002, Vol.5, Issue 42 edition and ending with Jun/Jul 2005 Vol.6, Issue 57. The discussion in the chapter concerning the magazines focuses on the theme of syncretism, which is explored through a consideration of article content as well as images taken from the fashion features of YMAG.

The fashion features are discussed in reference to three conventions through which they appear in the magazines, namely; a fashion/interview editorial featuring a host of local celebrities in the field of hip-hop music, modelling selected clothes as well as having a printed interview of the featured celebrity in each shot; a conventional fashion editorial with a themed storyline of which professional models are used to wear the clothes and be photographed in them; and a fashion design feature with images of a chosen designer’s garments, which is accompanied by an article about that designer. All three of these conventions are found throughout the twenty-two magazines collected, the ones chosen for this project are examples that highlight the syncretic elements of YMAG, which run through each issue, and hence are a reflection of such elements evident in Y-Culture. In terms of the discussions regarding the images of the fashion editorial features, the original images were scanned, analysed in their captions and inserted amongst the numbered pages that discuss each example. The result is a detailed description of each image in the actual text of the project as well as in each caption of the images.

In the case of the article content, extracts from specific articles are inserted into the text, recognizable by their smaller font and indentation, with a discussion that follows.
The Zone in Rosebank

The first of the discussion chapters is a history of Y-Culture and how it began with YFM in 1997. The relevance of the station’s physical move to the Zone in Rosebank is a fundamental event in this history. It was for this reason that as a researcher I decided to spend two weeks in Johannesburg in April 2005 documenting the visible manifestation of Y-Culture. The result was a day by day journal of my feelings, descriptions and experiences of my time spent at the Zone together with an array of photographs of the venue and the YFM studio headquarters, the Y offices, and the Y-Shoppe.

The importance of this is that it locates the phenomenon of Y specifically in the Zone but more so as something that is a ‘Joburg’ incarnation. It would seem futile to embark on a project concerned with an emergent youth culture and only discuss it from a textual analytic perspective if its centralized element, YFM, has a very thriving and active life around it, where what is written and photographed on the pages of YMAG and communicated on the airwaves is visible and ‘felt’ when walking through the Zone (being the headquarters of YFM). This first-hand experience of actually being in the Zone was an important step in constructing this project and relates to an important discussion that Geertz points out, namely “being there” that “the ability of the anthropologists to get us to take what they say seriously has less to do with either a factual look or an air of conceptual elegance than it has with their capacity to convince us that what they say is a result of them having actually penetrated another form of life, of having one way or another, truly ‘been there’” (1988:4-5). Nowhere can one be more immersed in Y-Culture than by being or ‘hanging-out’ in the Zone in Rosebank.

The Y-Shoppe

The data collected for this phase of the research was done on the same trip where I took photographs of some of the garments and products sold in the shop. This was important in order to communicate the style of Y-Culture, which concerns a very specific way of being in the world for the participants of Y-Culture. The fact that one can shop and purchase garments in a specifically demarcated area, which sells products reflecting this
cultural formation is important. This is because whether participants of Y-Culture or not, consumers are able to literally by products that reflect the culture and the meanings attached to being part of the Y-Generation. It is for this reason that I decided to focus on some specific garments sold in the Y-Shoppe and the meanings and messages they reflect during my time there. As with the images for chapter six these photographs have been inserted amongst the pages of chapter seven with detailed captions discussing exactly what these garments and their messages communicate.

Appendix 3 is a pamphlet given to me by Lirdy Zokufa (the brand custodian of Y) who deals with the marketing for YMAG. It is a pamphlet made as part of the marketing strategy for YMAG and Y-Style, documenting the labels that contributed their ranges to the YMAG Fashion Show at Cape Town Fashion Week in 2004. The labels discussed in the pamphlet are, Life, Magents, and Stoned Cherrie, and there is also a definition of Y-Style as well as what YMAG is about, as understood by its various contributors.

The Interviews
The need to interview others about their perceptions of Y-Culture became evident the more this project came into fruition. The interviews were not conducted as part of the research archive but more as an attempt to substantiate the main aims of the discussion chapters. The first interview was conducted with Saraa Nuttall from WISER (Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research) at Wits University in Johannesburg whose article *Stylizing the Self: The Y Generation in Rosebank, Johannesburg* (2004) was the first published academic article I had read concerning YFM, its emergence in the Zone and YMAG. The essay was very insightful and in fact articulated many of the thoughts I had been having at the time regarding Y-Culture, which was what motivated me to conduct an interview with her. The interview took place on the 10th of April 2005 at her house in Johannesburg.

The other three interviewees all worked for Y at the time and still do. These interviews were conducted from the 21-22 April 2005 at the Y offices at the Zone. The interviewees were Dineo Mahloele (the public relations officer), Lirdy Zokufa (the brand custodian)
and Greg Maloka (the station manager and general manager of Y). Each of these interviews were relevant in getting familiar with the motivations and perceptions of employees of Y in the cultural formation around YFM. Their enthusiasm and energy in what they do was inspiring and reflected that of Y-Culture itself. Their genuine insight and astonishment that Y-Culture could make for a masters research project motivated me further and made me realize how relevant this research is to our current post-apartheid context.

Sections of these interviews have been inserted throughout the text of the project and are recognizable by their indentation and smaller font. The full interviews are attached as Appendices 1.1- 1.4.
CHAPTER FOUR:  
A HISTORY OF Y

Y and its associated culture consolidated around the emergence of YFM, which is an acronym for ‘youth FM’. It began in 1997 with its headquarters in the suburb of Bertrams, southeast of Johannesburg. One of its redeeming features has been its independence from the SABC as an independent station broadcasting to the Gauteng province (Golding-Duffy & Vilikazi 1998).

With the change in political context of the mid-1990’s, many of the agendas in government revolved around “utopian projections” (Allen 2004:83) such as the ‘rainbow nation’, which got translated into areas of South African popular culture, particularly in the media. Allen mentions these ideals of a multicultural society projected by Mr. Mandela’s government, “1994-1999, coincides with Nelson Mandela’s presidential term, during which political rhetoric was defined by such phrases as ‘truth and reconciliation’, ‘non-racialism’, and ‘reconstruction and development’, all encapsulated by the evocative phrase coined by Bishop Desmond Tutu that so captured the imaginations of ordinary people, politicians and the media: the ‘rainbow nation’” (Allen 2004:83). The example that comes to mind is the ‘Simunye- We are One!’ campaign, which saw an array of continuity presenters from all sectors of South African society, having a ‘good’ time in the adverts promoting the new SABC 1 channel. This message of multiculturalism was undercut by homogenous perceptions of what it meant to be black and white in post-apartheid South Africa.

When YFM emerged they challenged such “utopian projections” of the newly elected ANC government by proposing the making of “a viable individual identity” amongst South Africa’s black youth (Allen 2005:83). According to Nuttall, it is this focus on individuality and assertiveness that is very different from the message that Thabo Mbeki’s government was, at the time, and is still
giving i.e. the government is very adamant in its assertion of ideals of blackness as opposed to Y-Culture’s assertion that there are many different ways of being black in a democratic South Africa, where she says,

“I think there is a very strong race message coming from government more than there was a few years ago around blackness in particular. I don’t know what your view is but I think its quite a destructive message and an anachronistic message” (Appendix 1.1.3).

Greg Maloka, the station manager of YFM and general manager of Y, also speaks about the multifarious notions of blackness that Y-Culture articulates in his interview,

“Our youth culture I suppose is even more interesting and extra special in that it is made up of a lot of components. We come from quite an interesting past that not many countries have gone through. In South Africa I think it is quite interesting and different in the sense that not only do you have black people but you have eleven kinds of black people; you know, even more than eleven kinds of black people- that in itself, what does it mean, what does blackness mean amongst different kind of people and what does it mean amongst other races?” (Appendix 1.4:1)

It is this assertion together with it being an independent radio station which have remained today and makes them come across as cutting-edge and unapologetic, and arguably is owed to much of its success and its ability to continuously push the envelope, as Dineo Mahloehle, the public relations officer of Y has said,

“We have been associated with a culture that is rebellious and on the move and ‘out-there, in-your-face’ kinda thing, so that is the kinda people we think we are… One thing is that we with ourselves we do not conform to what everybody else does… With anybody else, like other radio stations would not say ‘ass’ but we do because we wanna push boundaries, how far we can get with stuff. And we have been able to get away with a lot” (Appendix 1.2:1&3).

The name YFM (youth FM) came about as those who started it were in their early twenties, some of them students and some unemployed, who saw a gap in the terrain of urban South African youth culture, fresh into democracy. They were young, black male DJ’s who collectively saw the need to offer something new for the recently freed black public of Gauteng, specifically the youth. This sector of South African society has become increasingly mobile and transformative, as Nuttall mentions regarding the Y-Generation, that it aims to remember the “recent emergence of the black body from its history under apartheid” but more so to “transform” it (2004:434).
YFM’s growing success was due to it being the expressive public outlet for urban black youths, in the post-apartheid period, who according to Allen were “primarily intent on establishing an identity that marked them off from previous generations, and on voicing the experience of freedom for themselves” (2005:84).

This expression of an urban, black, youth identity initially accessible to the youth of Gauteng, soon became accessible to Africans throughout the continent through channel sixty of the audio bouquet selection of Multichoice’s DSTV. DSTV stands for Digital Satellite Television and is provided by Multichoice a digital satellite service provider affiliated to MNET, which is a private and independent television and broadcasting corporation. Viewers pay a monthly subscription—unlike the SABC and ETV which are free and only require a television set, aerial and television licence. ETV is also independent and unaffiliated to government.

Besides from opening up its listenership to the continent more importantly it could be broadcast to the rest of South Africa and hence the potential consolidation of an urban youth culture not only specific to Johannesburg. The establishment of YMAG— the second pillar of the emerging Y-Culture also aided this.

The establishment of YMAG, a year later in 1998, was a result of the growing success of YFM and the obvious need for a publication that could articulate many of the ideals and preoccupations of the station so that those who did not live in Gauteng, or who did not have DSTV, could participate in Y-Culture. YMAG, which stands for Youth Magazine has also gained relative success acknowledged by many, such as Sandra Klopper, who attributes its success mainly to its portrayal as an “unapologetic magazine for thinking youth” (Quoted Masemola in Klopper 2005:179). Nuttall also writes about the approach of YMAG by referring to its tagline on the spine of every edition “Y- BECAUSE YOU WANT TO KNOW”, and says that “Y’s line captures the confidence of a free black youth” (Nuttall 2004:443). What is clear is that the participants of Y-Culture are very
proud of their position in South African society and much of the content of the magazines reflect this.

**Moving North**

In 2001, YFM relocated its headquarters to the Northern suburbs of Johannesburg in the Zone it. Rosebank, which is a suburb that has historically been inhabited by white middleclass families. It has also been perceived as a less ‘fashionable’ neighbourhood than that of Sandton, which has become the hub of Johannesburg’s economic, corporate and business industries since the mid-nineties. This was due to the rise in crime rates and a growing fear associated with the downtown area beginning in the mid-nineties. Big corporate and financial businesses and agencies migrated out of Johannesburg’s CBD northward to the suburb of Sandton, which today has come to be known as Johannesburg’s ‘new’ CBD, as Nuttall and Mbembe have written “a geography of Sandton- home to the regional headquarters of multinationals and the specialized corporate services associated with them- would easily demonstrate that the city is increasingly a key articulator in a new, regional geography of centrality, dispersal, mobility, and connectivity that expands not only to the rest of the continent but around the globe” (Nuttall & Mbembe 2004:360).

The move of the YFM station headquarters was indicative of the general restructuring occurring in the city since 1994. Mbembe captures the energy and sense of newness in this trend of relocation and re-emergence evident in Johannesburg since 1994, in his detailed paper where he says, ‘post-apartheid Johannesburg has become the regional headquarters of international banks and transnational corporations and a major site of concentration for accounting, legal, and information services. The cityscape is dominated by office developments and shopping emporiums, convention and entertainment centers, and hotels. White-collar and service employment are expanding, as are residential areas for the middle-class and wealthy elite. These developments are concomitant with the emergence of media and high technology centers and new theatres of
consumption in which space and images are both figural forms and aestheticized commodities” (Mbenbe 2004:394)

In Greg Maloka’s interview, he discusses the unconventionality of Rosebank as a choice for their headquarters that it was a choice made by default, where he says.

“…You know, we started looking around and actually we did not have Rosebank in our sights. Some of our other choices, which are very typically YFM, the one building was actually opposite the SABC, what we wanted to do was put a skylight with the Y logo and at night just shine it on, it would have been nice, you know what I’m saying! And we thought ‘Hey, let’s buy this building just for that’. And our other site included, you know, the top of the Carlton Centre, which at the time, I mean, you know, the flavour in town was not as hip as now, but you know we saw that coming. But believe it or not, it was very difficult to get into those places it was actually a lot easier to come into Rosebank, which was very surprising to us. When we came to Rosebank specifically, it was kind of very ‘old-Jewish-tannie-land’. Sandton was the flavour where all the young and hip were and we came here, you know we are part of a huge change that actually transformed this area, you know, cos it started to take a different kind of shape” (Appendix 1.4:5-6).

It was a move that sparked much controversy precisely because of this ‘change’ of which Maloka speaks about. The residents of Rosebank at the time felt that the incorporation of the YFM station headquarters would see a decline in the exclusivity of the suburb but according to the general manager of the Zone shopping complex, Mark Souris, this sentiment was already felt with the development of the Zone “shoppertainment” mall (see website at the end of this paragraph). The initial inclusion of the Zone shopping mall into the Rosebank shopping complex was felt by many to undermine the image of the area as being one frequented by high-income earners, this is because the target market of the Zone is 18-35 year-olds. According to Souris, the move to include YFM into the geography of the Zone was strategic as it would bring this market to the shopping complex and hence boost the retail sector, which at the time was on a steady decline in the shopping complex (www.cprop.co.za/news/article.aspx?idarticle=173). One wonders whether the reluctance of this change by the inhabitants of Rosebank, or what Maloka has referred to as ‘old-Jewish-tannie-land’, was due to this change bringing in a black middle-class market as opposed to a young market.
When visiting the Zone, as a centre, it seems slightly displaced in and amongst the Rosebank shopping complex as it is surrounded on all sides by dull, beige and earth colour malls. Mutual Gardens on the one side, the Mall of Rosebank on the other and a parking complex on the third side. It is by no means a conventional shopping experience due to its function mentioned above as a “shoppertainment” complex with interactive entertainment (Silverman in Van Eeden 2005:46). The actual design of the Zone is testament to the above as it is not a neatly constructed symmetrical-type mall, as Van Eeden mentions in her piece concerning post-apartheid shopping complexes, “the innovative design of the Zone has moved beyond the inward-looking mall-as-box paradigm. It incorporates pedestrian routes, escalators and stairs to link the shopping level with the adjoining office buildings and the courtyard of Mutual Gardens, and design unity is conferred by its ‘music/movie/movement metaphor’” (Van Eeden 2005:46).

YFM is located on the second level of the Zone complex, and when one visits the mall the feeling is that that is where all ‘the action’ is. The second level is tunnel-like with neon lighting, television sets hanging from beams and tiles that sparkle, as Nuttall says “The Zone’s yellow and blue neon tubes, glitter tiles, reflective aluminium cladding on its columns, and exposed steel trusses all contribute to its particular industrial aesthetic, which combines the club and the factory” (Nuttall 2004:434).

The unconventional design and this combination of “the club and the factory” (Nuttall 2004:434) seemed fitting to appeal to a youth cultural formation, which was the target market of the developers of the Zone. Hence the introduction of YFM into the heart of Johannesburg’s northern suburbs which was a symbolic shift that signalled the arrival of many black middle-class families into historically exclusive white neighbourhoods of Johannesburg’s North. This is significant because as Mbembe writes that although Johannesburg as a city “grew in connection with both the forces and relations of production, less well understood is how relations of race and class determined each other in the
production of the city” (Mchunu 2004:380). This is important because as Mchunu continues “race directly gave rise to the space Johannesburg would become, its peculiarities, contours and form. Space became both a social and racial relationship, one that was additionally inherent to the notion of property” (Mchunu 2004:80).

Besides from this move being a symbolic one concerned with Mchunu’s above-mentioned discussion pertaining to notions of race, class and property, it was also a move that signalled the arrival of YFM into the lives of many youths from various backgrounds. Some of them were probably not originally envisaged as their market, that is many were white, Indian and coloured youths who frequented the Zone and who lived and went to school in the area. This emphasizes an important point made by Paul Gilroy concerning the possibilities of non-black youths appropriating elements associated with being black, that “popular culture has formed spaces in which the politics of ‘race’ could be lived out and transcended in the name of youth” (Gilroy 1987:167).

From Townships to ‘Jozi’

The move of the YFM headquarters into the Zone was a symbolic gesture of the social transformation that the city of Johannesburg was and still is undergoing, where the majority of the black population live in the surrounding townships and the most of the white population live in the northern suburbs. The move signalled the symbolic shift of the historically marginalized township into the urban city, as Nuttall mentions (Appendix 1.1:4), where the “suburban attitude” of the “new monied classes” exists in conjunction with a maintained “relationship with the culture of township life” (Bremner in Nuttall & Mchunu 2005: 359).

Greg Maloka illustrates the fundamental presence of township life in the city in where he says,

“Soweto is Johannesburg really, you know. Nelson Mandela, I doubt, would have been the icon that he is today had he still been in Mchunu” (Interview 1.4:4).
He touches on a very important point as to why Y-Culture emerged specifically in the city of Johannesburg, namely that Soweto has historically been associated with the anti-apartheid struggle and youth rebellion, with events such as the 1976 Soweto Uprising, as well as the endorsement of the Freedom Charter (Bremner 2004:521). It is this association that Dineo Mahlochle speaks about

“You know Joburg has got that thing, that rebellion kinda thing. I mean Soweto is not so far off. I think they knew that when they (initiators of YFM) came to Joburg, the young people around here were very outspoken unlike all the other provinces” (Appendix 1.2:5).

Although Bertrams did not form part of a township but rather a suburb that surrounded Johannesburg’s CBD, it was on the other side of the hypothetical border that separates suburbs like Rosebank from one’s like Bertrams. AbdouMaliq Simone has remarked on this, that in the early nineties after the official end of apartheid the central city once inhabited by the ruling white minority was left vacant “to habitation of all kinds” (2005:411). The inner-city or downtown ‘Joburg’ came to include the surrounding suburbs of Hillbrow, Berea, Yeoville and Bertrams to name a few which in the imagination of those living in the northern suburbs came to all be lumped together as crime-ridden and degenerate (Simone 2005:411). Therefore as mentioned earlier the move of YFM from Bertrams to the Zone across the ‘border’ that separates the north and south in the metropolis of Johannesburg emphasizes the changing shape of the city.

Around the same time a new word was finding expression in the everyday discourse of this emerging Y-Culture that encapsulates the movement that was and still is occurring in the city. The discourse is called ‘Scamto’ and is referred to as “township lingo” that has even managed to be recorded in the form of a dictionary by Lebo Motshegoa1 who describes it as “the language that forms a bridge between Zulu, Sotno, English, Afrikaans, Tsonga and other vernacular languages” (2005:1). The word is ‘Jozi’, a hybrid word stemming from the original name of the city, Johannesburg, and perhaps the word ‘iKasi’ which

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1 The Scamto Dictionary is a pamphlet produced by YFM and is written in a dictionary format with all the words and their descriptions in alphabetical order. It comes with an audio CD that can be played to hear the pronunciation of each word and how each one is used in context.
means township, street or avenue (Motshegoa 2005:7). It is a word that illustrates the fluidity of urban and township life and seems to roll off the tongue in its pronunciation. It is also a very fashionable word that has an element of ‘coolness’ associated in its use as Nuttall writes, “a city now widely known by young hip South Africans as Jozi” (Nuttall 2004:433). It is here, in this ‘hip’ city, where township and city life are rapidly converging that one will find YFM nestled away in the quiet, oak-tree and historically white but transformative suburb of Rosebank.
CHAPTER FIVE: YFM
RESISTING MASTER NARRATIVES

In this chapter I examine the notion of resistance in light of Sarah Nuttall’s remark in the section in her paper entitled ‘Translatability’ concerning the use of language in YMAT that “a tongue-in-cheek, parodic language frames a youth cultural stance invested in resisting master narratives of ‘who we are’” (Nuttall 2004:442). I agree with this and therefore address the question, in what ways does Y-Culture resist “master narratives of who we are” in a post-apartheid context?

Master narratives are socially constructed stories about the way we come to understand reality and our place in it (Steyn 2001:185) as well the “systems of meaning we construct to explain, legitimize, and guide our actions in the world” (Steyn 2001:xxxviii). The important point about such narratives, which Steyn discusses, is that they help us to find meaning, which is perceived as a process of struggle for social beings because such meanings are based on various “ideological formations” (Steyn 2001:xxxviii). In South Africa acceptance of such master narratives, and their “ideological formations” resulted in essential classifications of a recent past pertaining to race and ethnicity, which came to characterize apartheid policies and their notorious consequences. However in a post-apartheid climate (which Steyn’s book is testament to, with emphasis of the master narrative of whiteness) it is these same master narratives that are being deconstructed and reconsidered, and it is this act which is the expression of resistance.

This notion of resistance has been one of the important themes in youth cultural research over the last 40 years, and was the deciding factor according to Dick Hebdige in determining the contours of exactly what a phenomenal youth subculture was, “Spectacular subcultures express forbidden contents (consciousness of class, consciousness of difference) in forbidden forms (transgressions of sartorial and behavioural codes, law breaking etc). They are profane articulations, and they are often and significantly defined as ‘unnatural’” (Hebdige 1979:91-92). According
to Hebdige where the resistance lies is in how the above gets translated into the style of a specific subculture and therefore goes against “the symbolic order of structured appearances” (1979:131).

In Y-Culture the notion of resistance is not obvious as understood by much subcultural theory, specifically in the above conceptualization of Hebdige’s. Resistance in Y-Culture occurs in the form of an assertion of pride and the ability to resist the more traditional classifications based on such master narratives of race, ethnicity, youth and class. There is also resistance to those stereotypes in the domain of popular culture associated with music, fashion and labels for example hip-hop, Rastafarianism, Afrochic, Kwaito, R&B and Levi’s, which all have references to the previous classifications of race, youth and class but are most definitely not bound by them.

These two sets of classifications and stereotypes are drawn upon in very intricate and intertwined ways in post-apartheid Y-Culture, which is expressed as part of the same action of which Nadine Dolby speaks about, namely “border-crossing”. She understands this to mean those “who tinker with the borders of identity” i.e. “the contours and textures of the borders are open for change and reconfiguration: the possibilities of what one does with the borders, how they are approached, what they mean, and what they enable and close down, expand” (Dolby 2001:110). It is this ‘tinkering on the borders of identity’ that aptly describes how Y-Culture resists master narratives.

The Harambe Show

I attempt to answer the question, in what ways does Y-Culture resist “master narratives of who we are” in a post-apartheid context? by looking at one of the afternoon drive-time shows called Harambe, meaning ‘pull-together’ in Swahili, hosted by Leslie Kasumba, Sanza Tshabalala and Thomas Msengana, broadcast every weekday afternoon. It is a show comprising music, news broadcasts, a strong focus on sports events and subjects as well as other socio-political debates and issues. The material for this chapter was recorded during South African Music Week in August 2003 and therefore indicates the goings on in the local music
industry, such as the emergence of a genre known as South African Hip-Hop and its relationship to kwaiiko.

The DJ's come from varying backgrounds. Lee was born in Uganda but has spent most of her life in South Africa, she is also now the editor of YMAG and is known to be very knowledgeable about the genre of South African hip-hop. Sanza is from Soweto, and is the one who speaks with the most clearly identifiable accent of someone whose first language is Zulu, not English, when listening to the other two DJ’s one is not sure. Thomas is from Cape Town where he attended a previously classified ‘white’ boys high school, SACHS (South African College Schools). Each of the DJ’s has a roughly sketched role when it comes to what they contribute to the show. Lee, seems to be concerned with more political issues and debates as well as with the music played and facilitating the on-air callers for the competitions; Thomas is concerned with the music but also with the more seemingly trivial elements of global youth culture like celebrity gossip and rumours; Sanza is the designated sports reporter who besides being very politically charged and radical is also the one who seems to be the ‘joker’. It is this combination of all the DJ’s various contributions that make the show enjoyable, witty and fast-paced.

When listening to the recorded shows it becomes clear that there is a very obvious on-air ease, which the DJ’s of this show have with each other that could only be described as chemistry. This chemistry reflects the energy and wit that has come to characterize the show and why it was chosen to depict what it means to resist master narratives in post-apartheid Y-Culture.

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1 An indication of this is in a section entitled ‘Reverberate’ in YMAG (Feb/Mar 2004, Vol. 6, issue 49) where she gives an analysis of Cashless Society’s single Houtenot Hop (to be discussed further on).
2 He acknowledges this himself in Appendix A when reference is made to South African music week and he says, “That’s my voice, you can here, I’m the only SA voice!”
3 Although he is an integral part of the show as the week’s worth of listening indicate, on the CD’s concerning this thesis he doesn’t feature as it is mentioned that he is away in Cape Town.
4 After listening to the tapes I found myself laughing at Sanza’s wit and humour often.
The first part of this chapter will look at how this notion of resistance gets played out in the on-air spoken, witty demeanour and conversations between the DJ’s themselves. This will be done by considering how they move between notions pertaining to more serious socio-political debates and those of a more trivial nature. The second part of this chapter will consider how resistance is communicated in the musical content.

Resistance in the Fast-Pace, Edgy Discussions of Harambe

In the interview with Sarah Nuttall, she made a very relevant point regarding Y-Culture’s interesting about Johannesburg and South Africa in general, unlike the US, consumer culture still has that edge to it; it has a slightly political edge because it is experimenting with race and racial identities” (Appendix 1.1.5).

What gives Y-Culture its ‘edgy’ nature is that there are almost schizophrenic movements between issues pertaining to a political nature and those of more trivial inclinations. The show Harambe clearly expresses the fanatic movements between these seemingly opposing positions, which carry implications for current youth identities.

The on-air expression of this movement is reflected in three ways. The first is in exactly the quick movement in the on-air discussions of the DJ’s between issues and debates that on the one-hand seem to be more trivial and frivolous and on the other more serious. Secondly, that serious issues become trivialized and lastly the ability of music to communicate issues pertaining to a political nature. These three situations will be discussed by using three examples of the on-air discussions and debates of the DJ’s Lee and Sanza, and in the third example their interaction with the guest speaker Shaheen Ariefdien from Bush Radio in Cape Town, who is a well-respected hip-hop purveyor, and was one the members of the hip-hop collective Prophets of the City, who according to Neate, “were the original South African hip-hop collective and have a reputation that stretches back to the late 80’s” (Neate 2003:119).

Scenario 1: a report back on the World Athletic Championships (taken from Appendix 2.1)

Sanza: I think it is the truth that we have been in Cape Town I have not caught up with what is happening in the art activities, you know, but we still thinking that radio has not done enough justice to
review the past weekend’s sporting and art activities and reviews as such. The US Open has been happening since yesterday, Amanda Coetzee and Jeff Coetzee, or Amanda and Jeff Coetzee, are not a couple, probably cousins (puts on Afrikaans accent), from South Africa, they are actually from Mzansi (Lee reiterates ‘cousins’ in Afrikaans accent). The World Athletic Championship in Paris, Jacques Vryig (sings in Afrikaans accent) already digging gold for Mzansi in the men’s high-jump, this time around the gold is coming to the people (says something in a black language and then laughs). The Boes rugby world cup hopefuls, their training camp in Twane, it is no longer Pretoria, I think the only thing you know, we need to change the mind-set guys! Its no longer called Pretoria, they have put so much money to try and change the name and it is our moneys and forget.

Lee: (interrupts) Can I just say something?
S: Remember we are still paying for the apartheid debt, you know, our government, so let us not waste our money.
L: You know what the thing about all these names change, like I understand and it is very important you know because obviously names like that had bad historical connotations or whatever, it is just that people are wasting money on changing the names of streets and everything when we have like other problems!
S: Lee do you not think we are wasting money paying the apartheid debt? We did not cause it! So other things are necessary!
L: (interrupts) No, Sanza, money can go into stuff like education, you know what I mean and that sort of thing!
S: (interrupts) Okay, let us say then that the money from the bridge (Nelson Mandela bridge) should have gone into education, but you were still on the bridge for Madiba’s birthday and the bridge opening, so I mean do not be a hypocrite!
L: Were you there? (says accustibly) Sanza you were there! (in background) I have photos, I have photos!
S: I went to walk because I am a pedestrian, it is my tax money! I did not go because I am celebrating!
L: Okay, Sanza do not attack me! Thomas, you see!
S: Okay, guys it is happening in Pretoria, the loose forward, Schalk Burger, you remember from the Western Province. Cape Town (puts on Afrikaans accent), he is coming all the way to Pretoria, to T-S-W-A-N-E, Thabang Libsi he is still without a club (soccer). Xolela baba Kazi Chiefs Xolela, I think that is the best time he had the best combination, remember that Thabo-thos Thabang combination. Remember back in the day in Kazi Chiefs there used to be a teenage... 'go-man-go' combination? Even at Pirates there was that... who said, ‘okay if you do not know what to do with the ball give it to Bashin!’ (Lee laughs in background) We need that you know. Thabang Libsi must find a job, I think he is young and he is in football and you know how much they get in football, they do not have degrees you know unless they have been to the cyber village at Kazi Chiefs then they can have an outside career you know, in case they do not kick the ball, you know. Otherwise, we are making heroes out of our stars, Shoes Moshoeshoe I think is my highlight this week in terms of activities, you know at this age and he is still scoring goals- he gave up a good ‘turkish delight’ kind of living in football career that was hyping to one of the top teams in South Africa, but I mean what is a top team in South Africa’s kind of like PSL (says mockingly)... Fire!

One can clearly see in this example how quick the movement between seemingly trivial sports headlines and more serious socio-political debates is and that the presenters move between these positions constantly. What is most important about this movement is that it is not considered contradictory rather it is thought of as necessary in order to reflect the ‘edginess’ of which Nuttall refers to, which is what

\[ Y\text{-Culture has become renowned for.} \]

By no means am I implying that the area of sports is not political, this is a fallacy particularly in this country, rather that fundamentally sports and it’s following are pursued out of leisure and recreation as opposed to socio-political issues and debates.
This example is important for three reasons. The first is that Sanza imitates an Afrikaans accent when reporting about the wins that two Afrikaans South Africans had and in the same breath says that they are bringing home gold for all South Africans affiliation himself and the rest of the listeners with these athletes who do not fall into the specific target audience of YFM. Secondly, when one listens to this interaction one sees how quickly discussion topics are taken up and stimulated which gives the show its fast-paced character i.e. moving from reporting on sports headlines to having a heated political debate.

Thirdly, that this debate, regarding the name change of Tswane, clearly indicates how differently aligned both DJ’s are concerning the serious issue of changing the name of the country’s capital city. On the one hand Lee believes it is a waste of “our money” and on the other Sanza says that Mbeki’s government is paying for apartheid debt and therefore the name should be changed. This shows that the generation whose opinions they reflect, although juxtaposed, are both indicative of how the Y-Generation chooses to respond to such debates and issues. Namely that on the one hand although the name Pretoria has got ideological and historical baggage the Y-Generation recognize the need for its change but that perhaps it is wasting money on the past they were not a part of, because when it comes to political issues such as the name change to Tswane, it is not that important to them. What Lee suggests is that rather the money could be used for other more productive ventures regarding the economy and the issues pertaining to youth. Sanza’s opinion on the other hand represents the more radical approach that has characterized the nature of many youth movements in this country’s past, who were the victims of apartheid rule and although legally apartheid is over perhaps many youth still feel victimized by its legacy, one of which is represented by the name Pretoria.

Scenario 2: Teasing Naked DJ (taken from Appendix 2.1)
Lee: That is Moodphase Five in the back. Naked DJ is coming through and I think he is gonna play an all local mix in celebration of South African Music Week. Hey Q (this is what Lee calls Naked)?
Naked: That was yesterday girl!
Lee: Oh, so you only doing it for one day?
N: No, I will play-
L: So, our artists are only worth your one day?
N: No, you know-
L: I am just asking.
N: You know all my music got jacked-
L: (interrupts him) Say ‘yes’ or ‘no’, say ‘yes’ or ‘no’, ‘yes or no’
N: Lee, come on, I thought we sorted things out in Cape Town?
L: Q, say ‘yes’ or ‘no’, (speaks to Sanza) Sure Sanza, sure Rasta, look how Sanza’s doing it, (speaks to
Naked) say ‘yes’ or ‘no’
N: Hey man all my local stuff got jacked, you know that, you know, but I will put in some local tracks here and there. (All the while Lee is ‘umming’ and sighing as if she does not believe him).
L: So you will compromise them.
N: What?
L: You gonna compromise the movement! Sanza must come and help me. (Speaks to Sanza) Sanza, he is compromising the movement, and you heard what Shaheen said today Rasta? Come Sanza, come tell him, come ‘school’ him. We gonna wait for Sanza, dead end everything, done!
N: (says frustratedly) Eish, ok, whatever.
L: Ya! Sanza? He is gonna compromise the-
S: (Sanza interrupts) Naked apparently you only lost ten CD’s in Cape Town-
N: (interrupts) Who said 10?
S: (interrupts) So where is your Brenda Fassie, where is your Yvonne (Chaka Chaka), your Sinyaka, he’s hip-hop? Let me not expose you (everyone laughs)! How much music, you have probably got about twenty-five international albums, how much money is that?
L: (agrees) Yeh, Q, and so if you lost only ten CD’s, never mind-
S: (interrupts) You lost only ten local CD’s-
N: Who said only ten? Oh, so now you know the person that stole them! (Everyone is talking at the same time)
L: How many did you lose?
S: And now your mix is gonna be diluted.
L: How many did you lose?
N: I, eh, 1...
L: How many did you lose?
N: I lost my whole CD carrier!
N: It was thirty or something.
L: Thirty?
S: You lost only ten!
N: You are such a liar!
N: (shouts defensively) I have got unreleased stuff as well!
N: Tell me how many did you lose Q?
L: I lost a whole lot!
L: Tell us! He lost five-
N: (interrupts) Oh so are their only five local artists?
L: No, I am just asking, why does the Naked DJ... (gets interrupted by Sanza)
S: You are naked not local… the nearer culture, it is far from Johannesburg at the airport.
L: Naked, you are a disappointment!
N: All, right, ok.
S: But Lee, why do you not give him some Ugandan rap?
L: Huh! It is South African music week love.
S: Well at least it is Africa.
L: It is SA music week.
S: But Naked is gonna jump all the way to Brooklyn! (All laugh)
L: He is gonna go to Brooklyn, not even via anywhere, just straight to Brooklyn!
S: Straight to the brown bricks of Brooklyn!
L: Huh!
S: (makes reference to P.Diddy in an African language to which everyone packs out laughing).
L: Naked, he (Naked) should be ashamed!
L: Now, usually we would have the Naked DJ on but now he says he does not wanna play anymore because now he is under pressure (puts on a baby voice). Q, stop being a baby! Dude, I will play local hip-hop and I will make you look bad, just go do what you are meant to be doing. And stop going through Thomas’s case (of vinyl records) in his absence. Just go, go! And you are cutting your time short, you are lucky, because now you can play all the 3 CD’s that you have (she says this sarcastically). What?

N: Can I start? Can you just keep quite so and let me mix!

L: Can I keep quiet?

N: Yes, and let me mix!

For the rest of the track he mixes local hip-hop. There is a soundbyte introducing him which has a recorded voice over music, which is his mother talking about how growing up Naked DJ would use his lunch money to buy vinyl records. She describes this by mixing English with a local black language. She says, “you were paving the way for yourself, I am proud of you son, and you are going places. To me you are not ‘the Naked one’ but you are fully clothed. You are still my little boy, I love you”.

Throughout the whole week the importance of South African Music Week is the focus for many of the discussions and interviews with music industry experts. It gets mentioned how not enough is done to promote South African Music in light of mainstream European and American music which has become global (see Appendix 2.1). This issue, in the context of this assessment of trivializing a serious much debated issue in the terrain of South African popular culture, becomes more a question of pride in the ability of South African music to be equally acknowledged and appreciated as music from America and Europe.

The whole scenario is played-out with an air of mocking, and teasing Naked DJ because of his love of American hip-hop so much so that he wants to compromise the aim of South African Music Week by not playing an exclusively local music mix. This is shown by Sanza’s comment where he says that considering that Naked’s local hip-hop vinyl records were stolen, he is going to go directly to Brooklyn to get more hip-hop record-vinyls. This is significant because Brooklyn is considered to be the birthplace of Hip-Hop where the genre originated as well as where many producers and purveyors of the music are, as Patrick Neae mentions in his book (2003:9).

In this scenario Lee and Sanza imply that Naked DJ is guilty of exactly what is trying to be alleviated by having South African Music Week, namely being despondent and uninspired by South African music, whether it is new genres
emerging such as South African hip-hop as well as the old ‘bubble-gum’ style of the late Brenda Fassie and Yvonne Chaka Chaka.

The tone and the manner of the DJ’s in this ‘attack’ on Naked DJ is one of light-hearted teasing as they are giggling and laughing in between the comments. It clearly shows how by teasing Naked DJ in such a joking manner, they are aware of the seriousness of such issues pertaining to the support of South African Music and why artists are not given the credit that they are due, but also that perhaps that is all it is worth, awareness, that it is not that serious an issue for youth. The youth have the ability to decide on which music they will enjoy and purchase whether it is local or not and that perhaps such a preoccupation with international artists and music is because it connects them to a global popular culture, as Klopp"er mentions concerning the importance of technology that it allows youth to retain “their connection to a larger world- a more inclusive, global sense of belonging and identity” (Klopper 2005:186). This is an issue that foregrounds the need for South African Music Week and why it is taken very seriously by the media (radio especially) to promote South African artists and production.

However the participants of post-apartheid Y-Culture do not have to subscribe to listening and buying only local artists. Having a week worth of South African music might not change this but at least it provides exposure of South African music and reiterates the importance of supporting it. Ultimately participants of any youth culture choose the tastes and styles that they prefer which are done so as an individual choice more so than being reflective of group values. This is how Y-Culture as a whole is able to resist master narratives.

Muggerston agrees with this in his questioning of what exactly it is that post-modern subcultures resist if post-modernity- being characterized by “the breakdown of mass society”- “has ensured that there is no longer a coherent dominant culture against which a subculture can express its resistance” (2001:48). He goes on to say “post-subcultural ideology will value the individual over the collective” (2001:49) as opposed to the opposite (the collective over the individual) which is one of the
biggest criticisms of Hbdige’s work and others affiliated to the CCCS (Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies) of Birmingham, namely not acknowledging individual choice and the freedom of subcultural members, which Muggleton’s book is concerned with, “it is individuality that is the basis of subcultural authenticity”. It is this which according to Muggleton is opposed to the CCCS approach (2001:77-78).

Scenario 3: the ability of music to articulate serious issues pertaining to a political nature (Appendix 2.2).

Lee: Alright, it is South African music week, we are having a chat with Shaheen, yesterday we did have a chat (it’s interrupted by Sanza’s whistling). Sanza, what are you doing?
Sanza: Did you not here that Sunday song? The Chókop song, come on now?
L: Yes, I did I did I dug, but I am not understanding?
S: Okay, outstanding!
L: Anyway its South African music week. Yesterday we had a chat with Rosie Katz who is the general manager of Media Trust. The theme is this year ‘Education, Careers in Music’. Tonight we are chatting to a legend in South Africans hip-hop locally and globally, not just as an emcee but as an educator through the workshops he has had here and overseas but also through his radio programme and other activities that he has been part of where they have helped to take hip-hop to various communities, prisons, using hip-hop as an educational tool. It is our pleasure...
S: SHAHEEHEN!
L: Shaheen, how are you?
Shahen: Hey, how you guys doin’?
L: Cool man!
Sh: Did you not?
S: That was, that was just a caption of what Lee has written about you! Lee has got a whole study about you, you know.
L: First of all big-up and thank you very much for joining us Shaheen.
Sh: Anytime, anytime.
S: Cousin, there has been mixed feelings, do you think that we should still commemorate, celebrate or maybe use one of the terms when it comes to the programme of SA music week? What should we do?
What should we call what we do for South African music during this time?
Sn: Hey, it is tricky because I do think it is necessary to celebrate and acknowledge, you know, South African music and musicians, and their contributions and I do think it is necessary to have kind of the workshops that they are having at the moment, I think it is extremely important. But I really really do not get a feeling and I do not feel convinced that the industry is really making a concerted effort to support local artists.
S: (agrees) Yaaaah! I am feeling that! I am feeling it!
Sh: You know, there is a lot of exploitation still happening, um in fact a lot of local artists whether it is jazz or whatever music, people are encouraged to follow formulas because at the end of the day it is about sales, you know. And they push this thing about artistry and musicianship and very seldom that gets pushed on the backburner because units need to be moved- I think that is the one thing. Another thing is that audiences should be made aware of the music that they purchase because for me the saddest thing, me personally, is that the way we view music and consume music has been totally depoliticized. And people do not see something like a Britney Spears or whoever as making a political statement and very often Britney Spears might not even be aware of making a political statement. (Sanza and Lee agree). But it is, it is mainstream politics, it is creative capitalism, it is going with the flow. And then you have your occasional Dead Prez (thought to be an almost militant and political hip-
hop crew from America) who says something and automatically that is deemed as political, when all music is political. (Sanza staunchly agrees)

L: Whether they realize it or not.

Sh: And I think audiences do not always understand that, you know, all of us all of us. Because if you are gonna spend bucks, a lot of people are complaining about Bush and what they (Americans) are doing in the world and whatever, but we are buying American records, and we are buying (sigh) our hard earned cash supporting multinationals and all these companies who are basically exploiting Africa and the rest of the world and the poor. (Sanza affirms: Wow, wow!!). And people need to make sound decisions around that and that is one of my problems. Another personal thing is that I also think that locally especially because not a lot of time and energy and money goes into artist development. Um, musicians should be informed about the world that they live in. you know (Lee agrees) and I have said this before as well and I am gonna sound like a broken record- very often people do not understand the amount of killing that is involved in making a song. You know, trees are being cut down for inner sleeves of records. Part of the bloody rainforest is dying because your album is coming out. you know. Kids are being killed in the Middle East because of oil deals going sour (Sanza agrees) in order to make plastic for vinyls and CD covers and whatever. So killing is involved in order for you to create something and very very often...

S: (interrupts) We somehow kill our political idols, I think your right. Some of them have used music as a platform to criticize and you know, coming from the politics that is shown on CNN, and we are missing it, the African culture in terms of politics, and we really do not know what the bigger picture is all about, and people use that all the time, you know, perpetuating the whole mediocrity within politics, you know the whole mediocre political point of view, when we should be unearthing our different types of politics. When we should be talking about how we interpret what is so called politics or political instabilities or the civil rights, you know all that, or the, you know, the Mugabes and all of that. I even heard youngsters come up with their own interpretations of what is really happening in the southern hemisphere through music.

L: Or even just creating an awareness of what is really going on, you know what I mean?

Sh: I think people should just be allowed to express themselves on their own terms and also it should be somehow informed (Sanza agrees: Wow!). I think, that is just my personal opinion. It is a school of thought, you know, I am not saying that whatever, that it should be something that is followed or whatever, this is just my view from when I was involved.

S: Ek se mamela!

L: Now Shaheen can I just jump in right there. Education is not just a key or success its also a means of communicating to people who are around you and as a tool of, you know, sharing what is going on (Shaheen agrees: No doubt!). Hip-hop also has that potential, now you guys out in Cape Town, I always always say about how the Cape Town hip-hop scene much much love- you guys are going out to the communities and you do school projects. Can you give us a little bit of information as to how you guys impact the different schools and use hip-hop as an educational tool, because I remember how you were saying about how you guys go out to the prisons as well?

Sh: Well, um since the get go! think, like I think people like myself, like Emile and a couple of others, since the 1980’s we saw the potential, and experienced the potential of hip-hop outside just, you know, kicking rhymes and etc. as a tool to communicate very important ideas. That is the one thing, I think what we have managed to do, is that I am extremely fortunate to work with like-minded people, people who are genuinely concerned about their communities that are not so concerned about whether it is hip-hop or whether it is a particular genre or whether it is a particular vehicle. Is he genuinely concerned about his communities, if it is pottery if it is planting, if it is whatever, he will do it. And I think I have just been very fortunate to move in circles with people that are concerned about the community but are hip-hop heads as well. So sure there are workshops you know, through radio, through radio training, through demystifying radio. I think that is also a huge problem in South Africa is that television, well the media in general is something that is not very accessible to people so when people call in or engage with the media its about giving shout outs or calling in for competitions (Lee affirms: Exactly!) and they do not feel that media is not this thing that is up there, you know, media is human beings communicating with human beings, it is not an objective, removed system or thing. You know, and I think that is also part and parcel of the problem and I think that I have been fortunate to move with like-minded people to demystify the media. So I just feel fortunate, I do not think that we are doing good stuff, I think that we are doing necessary stuff.
S: I think we are doing necessary stuff, I think we are living in the most interesting times. Cousin, I know you are doing good work at Bush FM, that side, Bush Radio in Cape Town, you know what YFM is all about here, and the SA music week programme, that they are gonna be busying kids from the schools and bringing them here, you know. Sha, I know you have been involved with taking the education and taking the whole art form, you know, because we not lose the art of it you know, because sometimes kids might be running away from it saying 'we are preaching we are preaching'.

What about the art you know that fun level where we take hip-hop as an art form with its educational content into the schools, what should be the approach here, we should not only do it when we are here, what should be the approach with school kids, what is it that they can try and organize from their schools, how can they try learn, prepare themselves to learn before the SA music week's programme, because they are being brought to town to you know come and break-down this art form called hip-hop and some called kwawo, you know and other different art-forms that are embraced this week, but what should be the approach from youngsters?

Sh: Well it is about trying to narrow it down to one question. I guess, first of all, I do not think being aware of politics means you have to be preachy. (Sanza agrees: Ya! in fact I think that the best communicated political ideals are the ones that are not preachy, for me personally, because it can become either corny or condescending when it becomes preachy, so I do not necessarily view being politically aware with corniness or preachy. And I also do not think that it should be at the expense of artistry or mastering a particular skill whether it is a rhyme structure or flow or production or whatever, I think that a perfect marriage is possible and should be possible that is why in art. The problem that I have is that very often especially genres like hip-hop, it is divorced from its edge, it is divorced from the more revolutionary side, and for young people just to know that when they listen to music a political statement is made, it does not matter what music it is a political statement is made, it depends on what side of the political fence... and that is a good place to start, because then you will start listening critically to music and engaging with art critically as well and not just as something that I do on the weekends to chill and then the rest of life happens (Sanza agrees: Wow, wow, wow!).

L: Now Sanza, before we let you go how do you think it can happen that there can be a total balance particularly say in the hip-hop industry in South Africa which is growing, hopefully, where you have the education in check and you have the business in check and the emcees in check and the whole art in check.

S: (interrupts) And the whole art in its most rife and its most fresh.

L: What do you think needs to happen in your opinion?

Sh: Hey man this is like debates that we have constantly with heads all-over the world. I think the one thing is; if we start not viewing hip-hop, at least- hey I am sounding judgemental here- okay, for me personally, I think that we should expand the boundaries of hip-hop, we should not just look at it as emceeing, dj-ing or whatever, there should be people with organizational skills, people that are doctors, lawyers or whatever and um. educators. And once we view, you know, that hip-hop should not be placed in these four little boxes that is now this element that becomes soundbites for everyone, then it is possible to expand, then it is possible to have people that understand economics, people that understand art, people that understand politics, people that understand the need to educate and be educated as well because I think very often a lot of us because there is such a lot to do that is necessary we put ourselves in the position of educator when we have such a lot to learn (Sanza agrees: Wow! I am feeling that). And for me personally like when I have been called an educator, and I know it is meant with the best intentions, I feel uneasy adopting that because I have got such a lot to learn myself you know.

S: I am feeling that, I am feeling that, the humble approach.

Sh: But I think it is important for emcees as well to not just sit the whole day and write rhymes and become this depe emcee, we need to become dope human beings as well.

S: And more socially active, fire, more socially active, Rasta! I am feeling that you know!

L: Shaheen I have never heard Sanza this happy I promise you (she says laughing).

Sh: No because he crosses the boundaries, you know. You know Shaheen I had a problem you know, you go to the gigs, you know, and the 'nigga', the brothers (Lee laughs) are bopping heads you know and they have got their hoodies (track tops with hoods) and some of us look like we do not belong, and I am trying to say there is a global culture but there is American colonization and to me (Shaheen agrees: Totally!) what I am saying here is I have seen Japanese kids in hip-hop and they look more hip and they look Japanese and they look like Jackie Chan like you know, because it is natural, you know (Lee
laughs), because you come to South Africa or you come to Rosebank and then you see some heads and you know, it is not Brooklyn here man!

L: Shaheen, on that light note I guess (packs out laughing with Sanza) thanks so much for joining us. Big up once again to what you guys are doing out there, yeh, we will stay in touch!

Sh: Cool!
S: Bush!
L: Sanza you are crazy! (Laughs)
Sh: Peace, take it easy guys!
L: Peace man!
Sh: Ok bye.

One of the first comments Shaheen makes is that “all music is political” and that audiences need to be aware of this and what they are buying. He elaborates on this by saying that the public has been “conditioned to follow certain formulas because at the end of the day it is about sales”. This is important because although music might be perceived as a creative, artistic enterprise it does not mean it is not political. This is primarily because of the large amounts of money put into producing a music album for the mainstream market and hence how much money that album generates. He stresses the importance of people being aware of that.

Sanza goes on to speak about hip-hop’s appeal to the youth and how young kids are concerned with an element of fun but that this needs to be used constructively to educate them about politics without preaching. Shaheen responds by saying that in order to make youth aware about politics through hip-hop does not mean it has to be ‘preachy’ that in fact those who communicate best through music about political issues do not preach at all. This reflects Adam Haupt’s argument in his reference to Toni Mitchell, who is quoted as saying that hip-hop “has become a vehicle for global youth affiliations and a tool for reworking local identity all over the world” (Haupt 2003:22). It is this “reworking of local identity” which is how hip-hop as an art-form in reference to Shaheen’s argument, can be used as a means to educate young people about socio-political issues and their implications for these youth’s contexts (Haupt 2003:22) It is this “reworking of local identities” which would allow youth to resist master narratives pertaining to race, class and as Haupt’s paper suggests, gender (Haupt 2003).

Accordingly then it would seem that hip-hop is the ideal vehicle to communicate political or social views, which is what any avid follower of the genre will tell you,
but when it comes to youth and music, especially the genre of hip-hop, it has, according to Neate “hijacked mainstream culture and become all-encompassing, influential and global. It is the world-wide urban soundtrack” (2003:4). This chapter argues that the socio-political reflections in music associated with youth culture are not usually of highest priority. This is what Sanza says and what seems to be missing in hip-hop today due to its mass appeal, which Shaheen elaborates on by saying that it is “divorced from its edge, from its more revolutionary side”. Lianne Loots traces how this ‘divorce’ occurred in hip-hop as having originated in America, where she says that the capitalist mode of production was the “enemy” which the “urban black youth of America of the 70’s saw” (Loots 2003:86). She goes on to say that ironically, as hip-hop grew into the 80’s, it was this same “enemy” that the genre began to worship by artists signing to mainstream record labels because of the genre’s growing consumer public (Loots 2003:68).

This is a very relevant point because it is often believed that youth are not really concerned with issues relating to politics or social awareness. Shaheen recognizes this and calls for the reverse situation, namely for youth to be more aware of the political content of music, and that it should not only be something pursued as frivolous and only done “on the weekends to chill, and then the rest of life happens” (Appendix 2.3).

What is clear from Shaheen’s comment above is that he seems to have high expectations of how youth should listen and consume music, namely by being ‘intelligent listeners’ and concerned about the political messages in the music they listen to. He is calling for music to be appreciated for its seriousness and artistry as opposed to its fun element. Although Shaheen may be right in his understanding that all music has a political message, to the youth who consume or enjoy it this might not matter greatly to them. What is clear from much of the research archive that this project draws on is that the youth of the Y-Generation are not necessarily solely concerned with how politically aware they are or should be. Rather that if having such awareness is part of what is considered ‘cool’ and stylish, whether it is concerned with music or fashion, then that awareness is adopted and nurtured. In
the same breath however, it is this political and social awareness of issues and their trajectories into the history of this country, even though they may only be adopted because they are fashionable, which makes the Y-Generation unique in its construction of post-apartheid youth identities. This is part of what gives the music and fashion of Y-Culture its “political edge” according to Nuttall, namely their potential to be consumed for their political tendencies as well as for their features of fun and recreation.

This is where Y-Culture is able to be defiant and resist, in its ability to move between positions of socio-political awareness and those of more frivolous fun orientations, especially when it comes to music. Y-Culture resists mainstream notions of what being young is about i.e. having fun and not taking political and social concerns that seriously, which is how they are perceived by many older generations, but yet also adheres to such a perception. By being able to adopt either one of these positions at their disposal, or conversely, not adhering to either one exclusively, the Y-Generation are able to defy master narratives of what it means to be young. It is this same movement, which Loots refers to as the subversion of “urban hegemonic cultural practices” (Loots 2003) such as mainstream American hip-hop, which enables youth to make sense of their “glocalized” contexts (Neate 2003:85).

Resistance in the Musical Content of Harambe

This chapter will now focus on South African Music, specifically kwaiato and the current hip-hop ‘craze’, and the role they have played in understanding how the Y-Generation assert themselves and defy master narratives in the post-apartheid context. The main point in the upcoming discussion is to show how the genre of kwaiato although an important part in this assertion, being the first commercially recognized unique South African incarnation, has to compete with the growing hip-hop phenomenon that seems to be gripping the terrain of South African youth culture. This relationship between the two genre’s is important in illustrating the complex articulation of the global and local dichotomy in Y-Culture. This is due to kwaiato being conceived of as the original post-apartheid South African sound.
whereas hip-hop has always been associated with the African-American communities living on the margins of mainstream America (Neate 2001:20).

The significance of music in the emergence of youth subcultures is crucial in understanding how a specific subculture asserts itself. Although Hebdige’s analysis centres around the Punk phenomenon, the importance of Punk music seems to be secondary in understanding the way members of a subculture construct their style, and in fact has been the cause for much criticism of the book. Laing has criticized Hebdige for exactly this because he failed to acknowledge that punk-rock was first a musical genre before a ‘style’ and therefore Hebdige missed the point in his reading of punk as a subculture (McGuigan 1992:104). When considering the emergence of Y-Culture it becomes clear that in fact music was the motivation. This was because Y-Culture came about as a result of YFM which sought to cater for a genre of music, kwaito, and its following that had up until the emergence of YFM been negated in the terrain of popular culture in post-1994 South Africa.

When it comes to resisting previously mentioned “master narratives of who we are”, which Nattall refers to, nowhere is it clearer than in the musical content of the show Harambe recorded during South African Music Week 2003:

“As young South Africans, this is the music that defines us, it is hip-hop, it is kwaito, it is house music, it is jazz, it is everything, I mean we are global people here in South Africa” (taken from Appendix 2.2).

The above indented quote clearly indicates why this is so- it is a soundbyte taken from a recorded interview with a South African artist Thandiswa Maswai, who is the lead singer of the kwaito group Bongo-Maffin. It being a soundbyte means that those who produce the show Harambe play it in between advertorial breaks or as a bridge to cover-up a technical gap between songs or adverts. It has obviously been picked as a soundbyte because of the message Thandiswa communicates in it that fits in with the ideology of Harambe and more generally with that of YFM. In it she clearly states the importance of music in defining the Y-Generation, that it is a combination of various music styles and genre’s. She also draws attention to the relationship between the local and the global in this definition of the Y-Generation
that the combination of various genres is due to the fact that the Y-Generation are part of a global popular culture yet retains its own identity.

When it comes to the notion of resistance as discussed previously in this chapter or more so resistance as an assertion of pride and contradiction, both genres fulfil this defiant role but kwaito in more obvious ways than hip-hop.

Resisting Master Narratives through Kwaito

YFM initially started with its main aim of promoting kwaito (www.yfm.co.za: 2003, The YFM Story) originally conceived of as a “unique South African take on House music”, as well as other genres such as R&B, hip-hop to name a few. Today although their music content is still fifty percent local, it is arguable whether its fundamental aim is in promoting kwaito, “YFM was South Africa’s first and original urban rhythmic format playing the best mix of original Urban South African music and international artists. The mix is predominantly made up of hits from the Kwaito, House, R&B and Hip Hop genres while giving complete support to the local industry with a self-imposed 50% South African music quota – more than any other radio station in the country” (2005; www.yfm.co.za: About Us).

The significance of kwaito as being the launch-pad for this emerging station, in its beginning days was probably due to the fact that as an urban musical genre it really was a relatively unique South African incarnation with a following of predominantly black urban youths. This was seen as essential in establishing an audience and recognition in South Africa’s newly democratized public sphere, as Allen notes “in the immediate post-apartheid years young urban black South Africans were primarily intent on establishing an identity that marked them off from previous generations, and on voicing the experience of freedom for themselves” (Allen 2004:84). The kwaito following was the uncatered market for which YFM was initially established and what grew into Y-Culture, this was the ‘gap’ that the initiators of YFM recognized and wanted to fill, as Mahloele notes in her interview, a lifestyle. It is something that started when YFM started, but I think when Y started it was we gonna be a kind of revolution thing, they thought, ‘okay Fine, we are gonna cater for the market
that everyone leaves out’, you know what I am saying. The youth market didn’t have a radio station that was dedicated to them, so we sort of made that little community and said ‘okay, Y-Culture is young people who are out there who have a bright future, who want to be something in the future, people who are fun and who are young at heart’, you know. In the beginning it started out with those young people that mainly would like kwaito and house music and we came on saying to people we are going to play something that they do not play an air and at that stage when you growing up a young person is almost rebellious, and we became that. We have been associated with a culture that is rebellious and on the move and ‘out-there, in-your-face’ kind of thing, so that is the kind of people we think we are and we have brought that along until now. So that is what I would say is actually the culture.” (Appendix 1.2:1).

It is here where the notion of resistance and perhaps likeness to Hebdige’s analysis of the punk subculture in England is relevant in the emergence of YFM and it’s affiliated Y-Culture at this stage very much rooted in kwaito. Hebdige describes punk as a mix of musical genres reflected in the style of dress and accessorization that were relatively unstable (1979:25-26). The similarities with kwaito are unavoidable as it also draws on many influences both global and local, such as UK house music, male emcees rhyming and chanting in tsotsitaal (Neate 2003:109) and township gangsters known as “Amakwaito” (Stephens 2000:256).

The important point then regarding kwaito, which reflects one of Hebdige’s most enduring premises, is the instability of such ‘mixing’, but not in the sense that Hebdige suggests of the constant threat “to separate and return to their original sources” (1979: 25). Rather that this unique sound was a way to defy “master narratives” by drawing on such varied global and local sources to produce a unique post-apartheid sound that very much reflected the initiative of YFM in its beginning days. This initiative being a consolidation of urban, youth identities established around notions of race, class and ethnicity, so much so that YFM has even been thought of as launching kwaito, as Nuttall writes “YFM launched kwaito, South Africa’s first globally recognized local music form, a potent blend of city and township sound that emerged after the democratic transition in 1994” (Nuttall 2004:433).  

* This is a matter of perception because YFM was not the only outlet for kwaito, other stations like Metro FM were playing it as well as TV programes at the time such as Jam Alley and Pick-A-Tune, which were all around before YFM emerged, “practically, the new ANC government ensured SABC increased its black output, which brought Kwaito to every TV screen and radio station. Symbolically, Kwaito also expressed the potential new fluidity between the city and its surrounding townships”(Neate 2003:110). YFM and Y-Culture are not kwaito, they are orientated around it but neither one owns the other.
However eight years later the genre of hip-hop has emerged as a staunch contender to kwaito in consolidating an urban youth identity formed around issues pertaining to race class and ethnicity. The emergence and carving-out of this movement has been revolutionary in the realm of post-apartheid South African youth culture over the last three years because it clearly indicates a connection with global youth culture. There has also been immense debate around the perceived competition between kwaito and hip-hop in winning the hearts of South African youth, which has been traced extensively by YMAG. Some examples of this include the articles, *Africa Rising: Hip-Hop’s New World Order* (Phinubian: June/July 2003, Vol.5, Issue 45), which speaks about hip-hop on the continent and its relation to American hip-hop. *Like Water for Chocolate* (Phinubian: Aug/Sept 2003, Vol.5, Issue 46), which is an interview with a new hip-hop group called H2O who started their careers by attempting the kwaito scene and failed at this only to become successful hip-hop artists- the article unpacks this. *Hip-Hop State Address* (Leslie Kasumba: Apr/May 2003, Vol. 5, Issue 44), which is an article that interviews some of the producers on the local hip-hop scene to which one of them comments “there is an apparent war between kwaito and hip-hop, but I’m not part of that. I mean kwaito is a rich part of the Mzansi heritage and I am part of that. I used to look up to people like M’du and Joe Nina (kwaito artists and producers who rose to fame in the mid to late 1990’s)- if a song is good its good” (a producer called Fortune).

During the week’s worth of recording the Harambe show, and especially considering the fact that it was South African Music Week, it became clear how important the hip-hop genre was on the local youth culture scene. Although it originated in America it was finding expression as a South African genre of music, from the artists themselves to the technical production who were all South African. The result has been a genre specifically coined as South African Hip-Hop with artists such as Skwatta Kamp, Cashless Society and Pitch Black Afro enjoying national recognition and airplay on most of South Africa’s radio stations. There is a lot of controversy around this issue of distinguishing South African Hip-Hop from the global genre itself because as Zubz points out in the article *Africa Rising: Hip-Hop’s New World Order* (YMAG Jun/Jul 2003, Vol. 5, Issue 45) “No-one ever says
‘American hip-hop’. Its just hip-hop. Sure I want to blow up my people but I also wanna be on billboards in Germany. And when you buy my CD anywhere in the world I want it to be under the ‘hip-hop’ category not under the ‘African hip-hop’ category or the ‘world hip-hop’ category’. The significance of the emergence of South African hip-hop has crucial implications for understanding the resistance of “master narratives” as mentioned by Nuttall (2004).

Resisting Master Narratives through South African Hip-Hop

Most of the music played during this week was South African hip-hop. An important point was that many of the songs featured emcees rapping in English as well as indigenous African languages, which I found challenging as I did not understand them. Although this was a methodological issue, on a more personal level it made me feel alienated as a white South African but clearly illustrated the notion of resistance that characterized the initial emergence of YFM in 1997, that there was nothing in the terrain of urban post-apartheid youth culture that catered for black youths.

This movement between the use of English and local black languages (which has come to be appropriately known as “vernac rap”, YMAG Jun/Jul 2005, Vol.7, Issue 57: 105 Heads or Tails) is important because it clearly shows one of the defining features of South African hip-hop, namely an incorporation of both local and global characteristics. This is one of the most crucial points about the hip-hop movement is that looking at its history having started in the African-American working-class ghettos of the United States, to now, where it has arguably become the most global musical genre, that is a “melting-pot of African-American, Asian, Hispanic, and urban whites” (Lopiano-Misdom & De Luca 1996:36). Neate has written about hip-hop’s universal and ‘melting-pot’ appeal where he says, “Hip-Hop may be the most elemental expression of contemporary America but it is also, in its essence, universal” (2003:6).

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7 The best example of such hip-hop songs fusing English and vernacular languages on the recorded discs is on Disc 3, Tracks 5 & 6, which is the regular 20-minute mix by Naked DJ but being South African Music Week it was only local hip-hop that was played.
By being universal this means it has been appropriated and incorporated into the various youth cultures around the world through instances such as “vernac rap” or what Neate refers to as “glocalization”, which “in its most obvious meaning- the concurrent process of globalisation and localisation- it can be applied to all aspects of popular culture but hip-hop more than any” (Neate 2003:85).

When listening to the tracks mentioned above it becomes clear that besides from this movement between rapping in local black languages and English, there is also a move to rap in English with an American accent. This fact has stimulated much controversy relating to the question of why the need to put-on such an accent and Neate seems to understand it in a refreshing way, not as fake imitation but rather as “a Creole accent that is commonplace among young urbanites from English-speaking Africa. It’s hard to characterise: a very proper use of the language undercut by a mixture of African-American and local inflections of slang” (2003:87).

When considering this criticism pertaining to an American accent, it seems the genre of hip-hop is then doomed to always being ‘owned’ by America, however if that is the case then all music that is performed in English is, because most songs whether they fall into the categories of R&B, Rock or Soul (to name a few) always seem to be sung with an American accent regardless of who is singing and where they come from.

These two points of switching between vernacular rapping and English as well as rapping in an American accent illustrate one of the fundamental premises of Neate’s book, which is the innovative relationship created between the global and the local- the ‘glocal’- through hip-hop, namely “that hip-hop is a global culture and as such finds expression both transnationally and locally. The globalization of hip-hop does not mean the homogenous consumption of a homogenous product but rather the diversification of a culture that is reinterpreted and/or reinvented internationally and nationally and by city, small group and individual” (Neate 2003:79). This creative approach to the ‘glocal’ through hip-hop is how Y-Culture resists master narratives, by moving between the local and the global when it comes to asserting post-apartheid youth identities.
Hottentot Hop: An Example in the Resistance of Master Narratives Through South African Hip-Hop

This is a song by the group Cashless Society that featured extensively throughout South African music week 2003 on the show Harambe. This song epitomises how master narratives are resisted by drawing out explicit dichotomies between the local and the global spaces of which young people in South Africa today, move between.

This section will consider the lyrics of the chorus and first verse of this song:

"Hottentot Hop Bantu, one, two/ Khoi San walkman gun boot kung-fu/ calabash cash for tribal wars/ indoors/ telepathic ancestors for traditional dance floors.

Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba, Bantu one two/ It goes, ba-ba-ba-ba- Bantu one two (x4)/ from a homemade image.

Electronic clucks part/ For remote control Sun God/ Xhoi San with a walk man using Earth’s memory card/ Digital accents for a CD language/ Perceptions managed by a modern day savage/ Eating food for thought a process elimination/ Real time rhymes verses artificial insemination/ Visions in DVD technological landscapes/ Flocks of robo-pups micro-chipped handshakes/ Hottentot Hop, drum patterns for ritual meditation/ Put souls on Internet, beliefs infrared/ Computerized gardens, electrified trees/ Wooden condoms virtual weed enhance your needs/ Sipping umqomboti/ through a walky-talky/ With my wife Eletronika on a hologram/ With my third eye scanner I write laptop hieroglyphics/ Satellite appetite for a homemade image"

The whole song intertwines notions associated with traditional Africa and those of digital modern technology that conveys a very intricate image concerning an assertion of post-apartheid youth identities. It may come across as an assertion that is confused and contradictory by drawing on such diverse elements, which is how Lee Kasumba has chosen to analyse it in Y MAG in a section entitled Reverberate (Oct/Nov 2003, Vol 5, Issue 47 - this is a regular feature in Y MAG where lyrics from a hip-hop song are analysed by one of the editorial team). In her analysis she says that the most enduring point for her is that

"it sort of reminds Africans who might just consider selling their souls that what we have here on this beautiful continent is precious and needs to be embraced and perhaps we do not need to import all the Western ideals because that is when we will be out of place as peoples and lose our power. Initiating a whole other society’s set of ideals cannot possibly work for us” (Kasumba, Reverberate Y MAG Oct/Nov 2003, Vol 5, Issue 47).

It is clear from this analysis that the vast contradictions that are drawn on cannot be reconciled and accepted by Kasumba. I would suggest however that perhaps that is the aim of the song, to acknowledge that on the surface it may seem contradictory but this ‘glocal’ space between a “Khoi San walkman” and “traditional dance
floors” is very much where participants of Y-Culture live. Consequently these participants could recognize it as a contradiction, but could also attach no judgement to it, it is just the way things are.

Some may say that this song reflects a hybrid space of the realities of post-colonial Africa but as outlined in the introduction the notion of hybridity seems to lose its fervour in a consideration of Y-Culture (to be fully discussed in the following chapter). This is because, as indicated in this verse, there are too many fragments to consider when referring to post-apartheid youth identities, which draw on many sources in the construction of a ‘glocal’ space that is done automatically whether it may come across as contradictory or not.

What this verse and in fact the whole song manage to reveal is an assertion and appreciation of an African aspect of youth identities which is very unique and refreshing in the genre of hip-hop, especially when considering hip-hop artists who are not African, as Neate writes, “of course some kind of African identity has been a key signifier of hip-hop since time… Generally however this assumption means little more than a romanticized notion” (Neate 2003:89). Loots also reflects on this essential feature in hip-hop, of the reclamation of an African identity, but warns that it cannot be used to create affiliations between black people living in the African diaspora and those living on the continent, “Africa remains an imaginary homeland for American hip-hop- imaginary in that while the struggles of people of colour across the world have been for human rights, self-determination and an end to racism, the struggles of the people of colour in the North have not been the same as those of people of colour in the South” (Loots 2003:67).

This song by Cashless Society clearly emphasizes this by showing that the contradictions of living in post-colonial Africa are more about technology and tradition than about romantic notions of Africanism. The song shows the possibility of innovation and creativity in such contradictory spaces by drawing on the diverse elements of African tradition and modern technology to convey a message of what it means to live in post-colonial Africa where the boundaries between these two
collapse. The assertion of Africanness in this song illustrates what Nuttall says in her interview,

“it’s about saying ‘what makes me African is that I take bits and pieces from all over the world, but I take things and I make up a kind of stylistics of my own’- I think that was very different from the message one was getting in the resistance movement” (Appendix 1.1.3).

What Does This Mean for the Notion of Resistance?
In terms of the musical content of YFM it would seem that since 2002 much has changed, and hip-hop with its own unique history yet chameleon-like ability to be appropriated in varying contexts, has been an important player in that change. One cannot emphasize enough how both genres of music, kwaito and hip-hop, have played a crucial part in the success of YFM as well as in the rise of Y-Culture. What started out as a youth radio station aimed at urban black youths, with the intention of catering for a market that was left out or perhaps still ‘underground’, to what has become the formation of post-apartheid South Africa’s most relevant youth culture. YFM can no longer be described as an exclusively kwaito urban music station, rather that it owes its success to kwaito and acknowledges it as an important factor in its beginning days.

Like kwaito, nowadays South African hip-hop is finding a lucrative outlet through YFM. This shift in musical affiliation coincides with YFM’s physical move in location. Having emerged as an independent youth station, originally owned by a consortium (Golding-Duffy & Vilikazi 1998:81), in the southern suburbs of Johannesburg to its very public emergence in the northern suburb of Rosebank, in a shopping mall, YFM emerged into the popular culture terrain of Johannesburg, South Africa and arguably the world. It came to represent a thriving urban youth culture, which started out with subcultural elements very much formed around asserting a specific racialized identity that drew on ‘glocal’ elements and by doing so was and still is able to resist.

The sense of resistance has endured, which is what initiated YFM as well as the two musical genres most associated with it, kwaito and hip-hop. YFM, currently has its own style (to be discussed in chapter seven), lingo and musical taste which itself is a combination of many things, mainly the kwaito scene and the more global hip-hop
phenomenon, as well as a style known as Afrochic. All of these illustrate Y-Culture’s potential to draw from many sources, local or global, in the constructing of youth identities, which are not hybrid forms or a combining of ‘borrowed’ fragments. Nuttall emphasizes this where she writes, that Y-Culture comes to reveal “the preoccupations of increasingly middle-class young black people in Johannesburg and the intricacy of their modes of self-making” (Nuttall 2004:449).

When it comes to the discursive element of YFM and the Harambe show, namely the witty demeanour and manner of the on-air DJ’s, the notion of resistance is played out in a fast-paced movement between serious and frivolous issues. Another movement between the opposing notions of seriousness and frivolity is that the DJ’s are able to manipulate such issues to be the opposite of each i.e. to trivialize more serious issues and to draw out the seriousness of more trivial issues. This movement should not be seen as contradictory but rather as the way youth culture resists in any context, to confuse, manipulate and invert the meanings of everyday issues and events whether they pertain to politics, economics, arts, music and fashion.

There is no denying that YFM and Y-Culture draw on many different styles, whether it is from music or fashion, in the attempt to consolidate their identities as South Africa’s first generation of ‘free’ youths. These styles are not appropriated in their entirety or exclusively but rather “as a set of fragments, bits and pieces with which young people grapple”(Nuttall 2004:441). What makes this pastiche of bits and fragments in the consolidation of the Y-Generation all the more complex, according to Nuttall and in terms of Hebdige’s theory of subculture, is that “sutured onto these bits and pieces are the histories of isolation from and connection to the world that South African’s carry” (Nuttall 2004:441). The implication here, as previously mentioned, is that YFM and hence Y-Culture have a “social edge” to it (Appendix 1.1:1) because of South Africa’s specific history which many subcultures like the ones Hebdige speaks about do not. Greg Maloka emphasizes this in his understanding of Y-Culture as a subculture.

Global youth culture, you know, if you look at the global youth culture globally, I think you know every kind of city or place around the world will be considered a subculture as such. Our youth culture I suppose is even more interesting and extra special in that it is made up of a
lot of components. We come from quite an interesting past that not many countries have gone through” (Appendix 1.4:1).

Therefore to conceive of Y-Culture as a resistant youth subculture is to see it as cyclical. This means that it cannot rely on exclusive home-grown musical or fashionable styles but rather that it is always in a process of forming and reforming in the vast space between the local and the global with the only stability being its aim in consolidating an urban South African identity as well as its growing appeal, as Nuttall has said in her interview, “fracturing and reforming and perhaps fracturing again” (Appendix 1.1:3). It is in this movement that the participants of Y-Culture, the Y-Generation, are able to resist master narratives of race, youth and class.
CHAPTER SIX:  
Y MAG- A CASE OF SYNCRETISM NOT HYBRIDITY

Contextualizing Y MAG

Y MAG was released a year after YFM was launched. The relative success of YFM as being the most popular and fastest growing regional radio station together with the limitations of only being broadcast to the youth in Gauteng, were transgressed by the emergence of the magazine. This is reflected in many of the letters printed in the letter pages of the magazine where readers express their thoughts and feelings regarding the magazine and the subjects discussed. In all seven magazines during the year 2003 many of the letters were praise for Y MAG and expressions of gratitude for youths being able to participate in Y-Culture regardless of whether they had access to YFM or not, as one reader writes, “this mag rocks and I can only imagine what listening to YFM is like seeing that I am in the Cape. Reading your mag is what makes me feel closer to you guys” (Nandipha Matebes, June/July 2003, Vol 5, Issue 45:11). Another reader captures this inclusive feeling regardless of where in the country the readers of the magazine are located “Y MAG is the true urban voice which reaches far beyond the airwaves, which are geographically confined. I am in high school and find i ‘Y’ to be a valuable publication” (Sandile, T Khumalo, Oct/Nov 2003, Vol.5, Issue 47:10). Such letters illustrate the often symbiotic relationship between YFM and Y MAG as the latter being the extension of the former. Both cater primarily to the urban black youth but Y MAG reaches those of which YFM is not accessible.

The significant appeal of Y MAG in its beginning was that unlike other publications, such as Drum, True Love or Bona, it did not reflect the conventions of many magazines at the time aimed at the emerging black market, which were quite feminized and gendered (Laden 1997:133). These magazines were written with the emergence of the black middleclass in mind and hence were likened to ‘manuals’ that allowed the readers to cope in such changed socio-political circumstances as Laden writes “Magazines such as Drum (1951), Bona (1956), and Pace (1978) provided readers with new tools for accessing and
reorganizing a variety of cultural dispositions into urban lifestyle patterns... these magazines also supplied their readers with implied instructions for regulating new modes of social action, which they were likely to internalize and follow... these instructions suggested to people new ways to make sense of their changing demographic and material circumstances, and the regularised use of these instructions in a variety of socio-cultural practices authorized a new middle-class repertoire, often organizing its users into new urban social networks” (Laden 2004:255). However the audience of YMAG in the words of Greg Maloka had “already emerged” and comfortably taken their place in the urban landscape of post-apartheid South Africa.

“Advertisers incidentally talk about sort of your young black people as the emerging market and we have always argued that young black people are not an emerging market, you know. I like to think I am young you know 30/31 and I like to think of myself as having emerged a long time ago because I have always been exposed, you know. To me an emerging market is little nine-year-olds who are going to school together, who you know integrate at that level and at that age from all kinds of backgrounds whether you know be it racial, cultural or whatever the scenario is. (Appendix 1.4:2)

Where the former magazines mentioned were a means to manifest “a Black middle-class repertoire” (Laden 2004:256) and provided guidelines to cope in the changing socio-political landscape of this country, YMAG emerged as the ‘next generation’ of the aforementioned target audience who were a lot more integrated and articulate in discourses of urban culture and had therefore emerged. At the time of its arrival being fore grounded by YFM, the main concerns of YMAG as opposed to magazines such as True Love and Bona, were ways to deal with being young in a changing social climate instead of ways of being black with a growing middleclass repertoire. This is not to say that YMAG ignores the latter, in fact it is quite the opposite, rather that it incorporates these concerns into the meanings of youth and youth culture in post-apartheid South Africa.

It was this concern that prompted YMAG to be relaunched in 2002 with the emphasis being on “the talents and achievements of young black people who had made a difference in people’s lives” (Masemola, Oct/Nov 2003, Vol. 5, Issue 47:52). The need for a relaunch four years after it began was due to dwindling sales figures and hence the realization that in order for the magazine to be successful it had to be an extension of the YFM brand. Although it is affiliated to YFM it remains independent “reporting on issues

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outside of YFM, but targeted at the YFM audience and nationwide” (Appendix 3: YMAG Fashion Show Pamphlet).

The relaunch issue featured the country’s top kwaito artists with the title Kwaito Nation (April/May 2002, Vol.5, Issue 38, see figure 2). The focus on kwaito as being the theme of YMAG’s relaunch issue was because of the strong relationship and history the genre has with the station (as discussed in the previous chapter). The significance of featuring the top kwaito artists styled in a very ‘chic’ way, likened to a fashion shoot one would see in Italian Vogue, from the expensive clothes to the aesthetic appeal of the shot, was that it clearly showed the rise of a uniquely South African incarnation (kwaito music) and its accommodation both into and of, a global high-fashion aesthetic. Kwaito music itself has been described as an “international sound… drawing inspiration from styles as far a field as techno, pop, house, soul, rap, and hip-hop, kwaito musicians finally forged a winning brew” (Allen 2005:89). This has prompted many to imply that or refer to Y-Culture, and its associated magazine, YMAG, as hybrid¹.  

The Limits of the Notion of Hybridity  
The notion of hybridity is limiting in post-apartheid references to youth cultures because although the notion itself emerged as a result of the “post-colonial world” (Bhabha 1994:21), which arguably is a context which still exists, it is a context that has vastly changed in its rough forty-five year existence and therefore so has the notion of hybridity, to the point of perhaps being insufficient in the context of the twenty-first century. Joseph mentions this change in the post-colonial world and its implications for the notion of hybridity in her suggestion of “new hybrid identities” by saying that they focus on “contemporaneity as opposed to the historical conditions of plurality, travel, miscegenation, nomadism, displacement, conquest and exile that have informed ideas of hybridization globally” (Joseph 1999:2).

The notion of hybridity although useful as a starting point in attempting to unpack the conflation of various different elements in YMAG, the notion itself comes with a lot of

Figure 2: Kwaito Nation

(YMAG Dec/Jan 2002, Volume 5, Issue 38)
Photographer: Steve Tanchel, Stylist: Shaldon Kopeman
Detailed caption overleaf.
Figure 2: Kwaito Nation

As in figure one this cover picture is in black and white and features the country’s top Kwaito artists. It is a double-cover but for the purposes of this project I have only focused on the very front cover that one sees before opening the magazine. The significance of this cover was that it was the relaunch issue of YMAG in an attempt to highlight and reaffirm the main concerns of the publication, which were ways to deal with being young in a changing social climate instead of ways of being black with a growing middleclass repertoire. The latter is what other magazines aimed at the urban black population such as Drum, Pace or Bona (Laden 2004). It was this concern that prompted YMAG to be relaunched in 2002 with the emphasis being on “the talents and achievements of young black people who had made a difference in people’s lives” (Masemola, Oct/Nov 2003, Issue 47:52). The need for a relaunch four years after it began was due to dwindling sales figures and hence the realization that in order for the magazine to be successful it had to be an extension of the YFM brand.

The focus on Kwaito as being the theme of YMAG’s relaunch issue was because of the strong relationship and history the genre has with the station (as discussed in chapter five). The significance of featuring the top Kwaito artists styled in a very ‘chic’ way, likened to a fashion shoot one would see in Italian Vogue, from the expensive clothes to the aesthetic appeal of the shot, was that it clearly showed the rise of a uniquely South African incarnation (Kwaito music) and its accommodation both into and of, a global high-fashion aesthetic. Kwaito music itself has been described as an “international sound... drawing inspiration from styles as far a field as techno, pop, house, soul, rap, and hip-hop, Kwaito musicians finally forged a winning brew” (Allen 2005:89).

The styling of the shoot, with the men wearing smart suits and leather jackets and Thandiswa Mazwai (lead singer of Bongo Maffin and the only woman on the front cover) positioned on the lap of DJ Oscar Waruna with an elegant hat, suggests that since its beginning days Kwaito has become a serious, well respected artform that generates a lot of money. It is reminiscent of a photograph of a ‘mafia’ organization and the title “Kwaito Nation” exemplifies this sentiment, as if the country’s top Kwaito artists are like their own family or corporation at the top of their game and unstoppable. The fact that there is only one woman amongst all the men and she is seated on one of the men’s laps illustrates that Kwaito has always been perceived as male dominated and sexually explicit as Stephens writes, “Many of the producers of Kwaito music are DJ’s, either from the radio or clubs, and they are exclusively male. The music consists of usually a male ‘rapper’ with mostly female singing... Although it is party music, at times its lyrics are misogynist and live performances are renowned for the sexual explicitness of the dancing” (2000:256).

As with figure one the black and white print is obviously used when a cover is meant to be symbolic or make a lasting impression. The black and white theme suggest something that is original and long-lasting that will always be remembered and is a milestone in the history of Y-Culture which both these covers set-out to be.
“ideological baggage” (Becquer & Gatti 1997:446). This so-called “ideological baggage” is based on the notion that the elements making up the hybrid are ‘pure’, fixed and essential “prior to their hybridization” (Becquer & Gatti 1997:446), and hence implies that the product of hybridization is not pure or authentic. The result is that the theoretical notion of ‘hybridity’ does not really capture a sufficient interpretation of YMAG and its associated Y-Culture.

This is problematic when it comes to dealing with YMAG and Y-Culture and raises similar questions around the perceived hybrid nature of subcultures, of which Hebdige proposes, specifically in reference to the punk subculture, where he remarks how it was “the awkward and unsteady confluence of two radically dissimilar languages of reggae and rock” (Hebdige 1979:27). Hebdige’s suggestion implies that hybridity is a facet of subculture, however what this research aims to propose is that the notion is simplistic when beginning to understand Y-Culture and its articulation of post-apartheid youth identities.

The theoretical suggestion is rather that of, cultural syncretism, as understood by Paul Gilroy in his analysis of black British cultures, to “have been created from diverse and contradictory elements apprehended through discontinuous histories. They have been formed in a field of force between the poles of under- and overdevelopment, periphery and centre” (1987:218). This allows for an understanding of culture not only as unfixed but also as permeable (Gilroy 1987:217). Marcus Bequer and Joseph Gatti also emphasize the acknowledgement of contradiction in the notion of syncretism, in that the contradictory and complimentary boundaries between identities thought of as fixed are not clear and therefore indefinable, which implies that the often perceived contradiction of resistance and alignment is not contradictory at all (Becquer & Gatti 1997:447) (1997:447). This is important in attempting to understand Y-Culture because it is an indication of how it moves beyond the general conception of subcultures as hybrid formations as perceived by Dick Hebdige and allows for contradiction. The question then that concerns this chapter is, how does the notion cultural syncretism play-out in Y-culture?
The Synchronic Elements of YMAG

When considering the articles it becomes clear that the publication has a specific socio-political agenda that has strong ties to the past and notions of blackness, which are usually expressed in the articles around leaders who played important roles in the Black Consciousness and African liberation movements both in Africa and the African Diaspora. Some such articles include, Samora Machel: The Organic Revolutionary (YMAG Dec/Jan 2003, Vol.5, Issue 42:44), Walter Sisulu: I Will Go Singing- In Remembrance of an Unsung Hero (YMAG Jun/Jul 2003, Vol.5, Issue 45:42), To Kill the Black Messiah’s (This article deals with the possibility that the assassination of the leaders Malcom X, Patrice Lumumba, and Kwame Nkrumah, were part of a conspiracy to maintain the oppression of black people YMAG Oct/Nov 2003, Vol.5, Issue 47:54).

What is most interesting is that these articles, which come across as serious and not what one would expect to find in a youth orientated magazine, are in and amongst articles that deal with general concerns of youth that could be in any youth magazine from anywhere in the world, such as Surviving the First Year of Varsity (Dec/Jan 2003, Vol.5, Issue 42:50). This article is a guideline on how to cope with late-night partying, homesickness, writing lecture notes, and the pressure of exams. Here are some examples from the article:

- Learn touch typing so that you can type essays faster and easier.
- Take mementoes from home because you will miss home.
- Stock up on phone cards or air-time.
- Take a camera. These are going to be the best years of your life so make sure you keep a record of them.
- Go to the Orientation Week. It will help you find your way around campus, meet new friends and have a better idea of what is expected of you.

It is in the conflation of the socio-political articles that communicate messages pertaining to notions of blackness and identity, with those ones such as the latter that deal with being young in an urban post-apartheid context, where one can begin to understand the synchronic character of YMAG. In his interview Greg Maloka, the station manager of Y emphasizes this conflation of issues pertaining to a specific understanding of blackness as well as to those of youth in YMAG. He also implies the very limits of the notion of
hybridity as understood by Becquere and Gatti as not being as simplistic as a combination of two essential identities (Appendix 1.4).

“It’s not about black and white I think in this country and in many other countries we choose to make it that, you know, we kind of simplify it to races and its not really just about races, its also just about the struggle of young people generally. You know cos young people generally go through very similar experiences and challenges in life. It is quite universal”.

“Every phenomenon is made of different facets and its not just something you can cut in half and say this one half is like this and this other half is like that. You can actually break it into ten million pieces and each piece will be different.” (Appendix 1.4:8)

Maloka emphasizes how notions of race and identity are not the only focus of YMAG, the focus on youth is more what the publication is concerned with. What he says reigns true to a degree but what does seem to make YMAG a unique enterprise, in the realm of post-apartheid youth culture, is this pertinent communication of racial identity but how it is conflated with the general condition of youth, which all youths no matter what their racial affiliation can relate to. The space that YMAG indicates its readers are concerned with is one that draws on notions of racial identity, South Africa and the world, the past and the present in and attempt to live as a youngster in post-apartheid Mzansi (In many of the articles in the Dec/Jan 2003 edition, after the words ‘South Africa’ in brackets, next to them the word ‘Mzansi’ appeared. It was an attempt to make the word catch on and become more familiar to the readers, which I think it did as this word appears in almost every article mentioning South Africa).

A case in point that illustrates this ‘universality of youth’ of which Maloka speaks about is the way in which YMAG deals with sex, which as most would agree with is a relevant topic for a youth publication.

There is a regular feature called ‘Dear Sexa’ which is like an ‘agony auntie’ type page but deals with topics of exclusively sexual concerns, which at times are quite explicit. For example in the Feb/Mar issue a reader writes how she struggles to find a partner with a “medium sized manhood” (Feb/Mar 2003. Vol.5, Issue 43:49), the columnist replies in a crude, blunt yet comical manner that makes the feature explicit but amusing to read:
“You know women are strange creatures, and as a woman I will be the first to admit it. When men complain that we do not actually know what we want they are right. If he is big he should be small if he is small he must be medium if he is medium he must be large, what the f**k! I think your problem girlfriend is not his large penis but the restriction of orgasmic pleasure to your erogenous zones and in lay mans terms not enough foreplay. Next time he hurts you do not scream, slap him, let him scream and see if he is having fun, but if all else fails, dump the bastard, he does not know what he is doing!”

The ‘Dear Sexa’ feature in this edition is slotted between two feature articles entitled *Yretro: Sly and the Family Stone* (Abrahams, Feb/Mar 2003, Vol.5 Issue 43:46) and *Music Legend: Fela Kuti- Kicking Teeth!* (Hlongwane, Feb/Mar 2003, Vol. 5, Issue 43:51). Both are about great musicians the former American, who according to the author, “was no ordinary traditional soul act... the social commentary of Sly’s music (was) influenced by hippie culture” (Abrahams, Feb/Mar 2003, Issue 43:46). The latter an African musician, who according to the author was a Pan-Africanist, based on an assessment of his political life and an analysis of his lyrics (Hlongwane Feb/Mar 2003, Vol. 5 Issue 43:51). This is further expressed in the bold sentence at the top of the article “Between the Black Nationalism of Malcolm X, which rekindled his pride as an African man, and the insightful socialism of Nkrumah, Fela discovered his mission” (Hlongwane Feb/Mar 2003, Vol. 5 Issue 43:51).

The significance of the ‘Dear Sexa’ article being positioned in-between these two feature articles both dealing with music, one with an American group and one with an African artist is that it emphasizes the limitations of the notion of hybridity in the context of YMAG. This is because not only are YMAG readers dealing with explicit experiences of sex as most people of this age-group are, they are also drawing on influences as diverse as Sly and the family Stone, and Fela Kuti, in an attempt to construct a world that reflects an urban South African youth identity. The construction of this identity draws on different ideals of blackness, one American and one African, as well as a general experience of urban youth, which includes sex. To describe this as hybrid is simplistic because it suggests a formation of something brand new. Rather a description of the above as syncretic is more appropriate because this allows the boundaries of different ideals of blackness and youth to remain in tact but that their communication and relationships in the same context is what is important and what are continuously changing, as Becquer and Gatti mention “It (syncretism) entails the ‘formal’ coexistence
of components whose precarious identities are mutually modified in their encounter, yet whose distinguishing differences, as such, are not dissolved or elided in these modifications, but strategically reconstituted in an ongoing war of position” (1997:447).

YMAG represents a world, which according to Nuttall, “appears increasingly as a set of fragments, bits and pieces, with which young people grapple” (2004:440), which in themselves are precarious and unstable. It is for this reason that it should come as no surprise to see the everyday sexual concerns of young people slotted between two music legends that come from vastly different circumstances, yet share the experience of being black. According to the compilers of YMAG, the appeal of these two musical legends, to the Y-Generation, are their respective experiences of blackness as well as the everyday concerns of urban youth.

Synteticism in Motion

Where syncretism as a concept transcends that of hybridity is by acknowledging the innovation that is possible through contradiction i.e. “negating the strict relations of contradiction/complimentarity between identities presumed fixed” (Becquer & Gatti 1997:447). This became clear in the Dec/Jan 2003, Vol. 5, Issue 42, when a few of the DJ’s were featured on the cover with President Thabo Mbeki, with the bold red title “Yona Ke Yona, Mr President” (Figure 1). This shot (Figure 1) is a black and white image in which each of them is making a peace sign with their fingers, perhaps in attempt to show that peace exists between the youth and the often perceived elusive president, who many believe has not really taken heed of the youth and their concerns, as the writer of the article says in the second extracted paragraph below.

The phrase Yona Ke Yona means, This is it (Matshegoa 2004, Scantho Dictionary) and is a catchphrase that has come to epitomise the Y-Generation. Those who listen to YFM will home it as one of its jingles- “99.2, Yona Ke Yona”, and those who read the magazine will see it on every cover as part of the brand logo. When considering the article of which the phrase forms part of the title, it is clear that it is a direct unapologetic address to the president informing him that in the everyday lives of the youth of the country, ‘this is it',
Figure 1: Thabo Mbeki and the YFM DJ's

(YMAG Dec/Jan 2003, Volume 5, Issue 42) - Photographer: Steve Tanchel,
Art Director: Kassie Naidoo, Stylist: Shaldon Kopeman

Detailed caption overleaf.
Figure 1: Thabo Mbeki and the YFM DJ’s

There are three DJ’s as well as the news reader of YFM at the time featured on this cover with the president. They are Fana “Khabzela” Khaba, who came out about his HIV positive status and was an important role-model for many of the Y-Generation by encouraging them to get tested, he is no longer alive. Leslie Kasumba who is one of the DJ’s on the Harambe show, discussed in chapter five, and who is currently the editor of YMAG, at the time of this shoot she was not. To the right of Mr Mbeki is Hope Mahlangu the news editor of YFM at the time, and next to her is ‘Rude-Boy Paul’, or Paul Mnisi, who at the time was the editor of YMAG (but is not any longer). He hosts the 12-3pm show everyday called Kamikaze Heat.

Due to the shot being in black and white one is immediately drawn to the president in the centre because of his stark black pinstripe suite amongst the white shirts of the DJ’s. The contrasts of black and white are quite dramatic but the effect is eased with the bold red titles on the cover. These three colours reflect the YMAG logo on the top left corner of the image and implies the simplicity of three colours, black, white and red, which in their combination are very striking and eye-catching. The phrase Yona Ke Yona, means, This is It (Matshegoa 2004, Scamtho Dictionary) and is a catchphrase that has come to epitomise the Y-Generation. Those who listen to YFM will hear it as one of its jingles—“99.2, Yona Ke Yona”, and those who read the magazine will see it on every cover as part of the brand logo. When considering this image of which the phrase forms part of, it is clear that it is a direct unapologetic address to the president informing him that in the everyday lives of the youth of the country, ‘this is it’. To the reader of YMAG it could also indicate that the president himself is saying this to the Y-Generation especially since he is holding up a peace sign.

The 4 DJ’s are turned towards Mr. Mbeki who is facing forward, which emphasizes his central position in the shot. YMAG has been the first post-apartheid youth publication to feature a South African president posing on its cover. Most readers of the magazine and South Africans in general, are probably only accustomed to seeing him on the front pages of newspapers and not as a ‘model’ on the cover of a publication formed around urban youth identities, which deals explicitly with issues relating to sex, music and fashion. It is an attempt to reconcile the often misrepresented political persona of Mbeki with the ideals and motives of the Y-Generation.

The presence of Thabo Mbeki on the cover of YMAG holding up a peace sign is also symbolic of how, according to Nuttall, Y-Culture jams and remakes “cultural codes and signifiers from the past” into new understandings. This image of the president flanked by YFM DJ’s represents Y-Culture’s strong connections and awareness with the historical and political past of this country, which gets communicated in the pages of the magazine, on the radio shows of YFM and in the merchandise sold at the Y-Shoppe.
The article begins with an introductory quote from an article by Mark Gevisser published in the Sunday Times who tells of a photograph hanging in Thabo Mbeki's study at the Groote Schuur Estate. "Many things have been said about Mr. Mbeki, who is many ways the President of our generation. Most YMAG readers will have barely experienced the Mandela presidency properly. Mbeki is effectively our President. Do we understand him? Well, we gave him a zap sign in a mass concert because we think he is an idiot over the AIDS issue. The funny thing I have heard, is that people who are intelligent and bright, who sleep around without condoms, say 'God will judge Mbeki for what he is done'. And I have thought to myself, if I were God and I were faced with someone who believes HIV causes AIDS and still sleeps around without care for himself or those around him. And there was another person who was not convinced that HIV causes AIDS, who would I judge more harshly?"

"I have heard people say that Mbeki does not care about young people, that he thinks kwaiito is a waste of time. I have heard that he is intolerant and is a dictator. I also know that Dr. Mandela once had the ANC Youth League's funds cut off because they wanted a debate about whether we should keep the name 'Springboks', but because it was in a brand of reconciliation, his intolerance was tolerated. I also know that there was a study on youth unemployment that was commissioned during Mandela's presidency and to this day no one knows what happened to it. Yet we would never think that Mandela is a bad President. Perhaps it is time we got to understand our President better. It is a pity he was unable to respond to our questions before going to print. So instead we have written an open letter to him. Maybe he will come back to us."

"Actually Mr. President, or T-Boz, can I call you that? Okay maybe not, so Mr. President, while on this subject of friends with questions I have another one who has a question. White boy who is curious. He wants to know whether you dislike white people. I told him that you did not, I told him that you tell the truth as it appears to you. He asked me about this two nations thing you are always going on about. He said to me, 'Look at Cyril Ramaphosa, look at Tokyo Sexwale, they are rich, they are not white'. I pointed out to him that this was simplistic, I reminded him of the Statistics SA report which has just come out and shows that since 1994 black Mzansiians have gotten poorer and white Mzansians richer, so the wealth divide along racial lines still holds true. He asked me, aren't I concerned that you spend so much time telling white people they are better off than you upset them. I told him that no, I had not spent that much time thinking about this. I was just grateful that we no longer had to be scolded by the president of the country whenever black people asked white people to show that they are making an effort. But now that he has mentioned it, I have about it and I think, Mr. President, that maybe you could slow down a little. Like take this white friend, he is not progressive, does not claim or even want to be, but he digs Mzansi and being a Mzansiian. But he is also feeling a little paranoid, they are apt to do irrational things. And you know it is not exactly great for your self-esteem if you are always being reminded that who you are is based upon an earlier evil. So I think that you might want to start bringing up race too often. This is not to say that we believe the challenge of racism is no longer an issue, but there might be more creative ways of tackling it". (Mahabane, YMAG Dec/Jan 2003, Issue 42: 41-42).

The author, Ishumeleng Mahabane, indicates in the second extract that the article is written in a letter format, which he refers to as an “open letter”. It is disappointing in that it is a one-sided expression of ‘This is It’ with no dialogue between the author and the president- it comes across as more of a vent on behalf of the author as to ‘educate’ the

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2 This is an American rap artist who has become a world-wide success over the last three years.
president on the territory in which the youth of this country have chosen to locate themselves. In the first extract Mahabane attempts to try and ‘understand’ Mbeki by writing this letter, however no such understanding occurs, but rather an expression of how Mr Mbeki should understand the Y-Generation.

YMAG has been the first post-apartheid youth publication to feature a South African president posing on its cover with members of YFM. Most readers of the magazine and South Africans in general, are probably only accustomed to seeing him on the front pages of newspapers and not as a ‘model’ on the cover of a publication formed around urban youth identities, which deals explicitly with issues relating to sex, music and fashion. It is an attempt to reconcile the often misrepresented political persona of Mbeki with the ideals and motives of the Y-Generation. This is significant because as already discussed those who participate in Y-Culture draw on many sources in the construction of their post-apartheid youth identities, which are not exclusively concerned with notions of a political nature. The tension thus created boils down to a question of the relationship between the Y-Generation and those generations that went before them and hence the past, which Mr. Mbeki seems to symbolize in this cover-image, and which Mahabane draws-out in the article.

The ideals and concerns of the Y-generation do not necessarily contradict those that have come before but in fact those of the former very much form an important part of Y-Culture. There is a one-way flow between the two, flowing from the older generations to the Y-Generation but not the other way, especially when it comes to notions of post-apartheid identities and blackness, which is indicated in the third extract. Nuttall remarked on this in her interview where she says that at the moment there is a very idealized notion of blackness being communicated by Mr. Mbeki’s government, it is an ideal that has its beginnings in resistance movement of the apartheid era (Appendix 1.1:2), of which the youth today are moving beyond. Nuttall explains this as a kind of ‘cultural jamming’ i.e. “that new youth cultures are superseding the resistance politics of an earlier generation, while still jamming, remixing, and remaking cultural codes and signifiers from the past” (Nuttall 2004:436). In a way, the presence of Thabo Mbeki (or
‘T-Boz’ which the author refers to him as in the third extract) on the cover of YMAG holding up a peace sign is a prime indication of how Y-Culture jams and remakes “cultural codes and signifiers from the past” into new understandings.

This is precisely how YMAG and Y-Culture could be considered syncretic, is in the above mentioned ‘cultural jamming’, which conflates elements of the past and present, especially when it comes to ideas about master narratives, such as race and class as discussed in the previous chapter. This also extends to what Nuttall refers to as “resistance politics” that when it comes to the act of resistance the Y-Generation do so by asserting their conflated identities that draw on various elements that cannot be clearly fixed and bounded. She mentions that this is very different from the kind of resistance politics occurring during apartheid. Having Thabo Mbeki on the cover emphasizes this difference in indicating the conflating and syncretic elements of which the Y-Generation draw on in their construction of post-apartheid youth identities.

Fashioning the Y-Generation

When it comes to the fashion pages of YMAG, there is no strict uniformity carried through to each edition. Perhaps this is because YMAG is not strictly classified as a ‘fashion magazine’ such as Elle, and therefore does not cohere to rigid guidelines and conventions of exclusively fashion magazines. The fact that it is a youth magazine concerned with the field of youth culture, gives it a lot more freedom when compiling its fashion editorials, from the choice of models to the styling of the various shoots, to the non-conformity of each edition’s fashion editorial layout. For example, in the six out of the seven editions there were interview/editorials with Hip-Hop practitioners and emcees (Hip-Hop Nation: Gangsta Style, Dec/Jan 2003, Vol.5, Issue 42:72), up-and-coming Hip-Hop enthusiasts (Hip-Hop Style: B-Boy Style Fashion, Feb/Mar 2003, Vol.5, Issue 43:70), young poets (The Fashion is the Word, Apr/May 2003, Vol.5, Issue 44:76), young female R&B singers (Ladies with an Attitude and The Show Must Go On, Aug/Sept 2003, Vol.5, Issue 46:58-69), a new Kwaito artist (Kasi Music: Brown Dash on the Brink of Blowing Up and Big City, Bright Lights, Oct/Nov 2003, Vol.5, Issue 47:68-

In all of the above fashion/interview editorials, the models are everyday people about to make a name for themselves in the realm of South African popular culture (for example the cast of Yizo Yizo 3 who are relatively unknown) or celebrities in their own right such as Appleseed of the group Bongo-Maffin (Apr/May 2003, Vol.5, Issue 44:86) and those featured in the Hip-Hop Nation: Gangsta Style (Dec/Jan 2003, Vol.5, Issue 42:72) shoot (Figures 3-7). The result of using celebrities, and up-and-coming celebrities, is that the clothes become the secondary focus, the subjects of the shots are what makes these editorials very appealing. It enables the reader to see the celebrity in a different context, namely instead of being heard on radio as a DJ they are now seen in a fashion editorial, and therefore makes them seem more approachable especially when the fashion editorial shots are accompanied by an interview or question which they have answered. As a reader writes, “I have never seen those unreachable types of people in YMAG. I really like that I can really identify with all those people on the beautiful pages of the magazine” (Aug/Sept 2003, Vol.5, Issue 46:11).


Then there are the fashion designer features that feature up-and-coming young South African designers, Machere (Dec/Jan 2003:82), Darkie (Feb/Mar 2003, Vol.5, Issue 48).

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3 Refer to figures 8-13.

The significance of all three features concerning the fashion of Y-Culture is that it in the overall product of each magazine the fashion pages are conflations of celebrities, professional models and designers as the models, their thoughts, views, opinions and poetry about the various industries they are involved in as well as the various styles of clothes they are posing in. This is important if one is considering the notion of syncretism in reference to Y-Culture as the magazine clearly shows the various influences the Y-Generation draw on in the construction of their style and way they choose to inhabit the world, as Nuttal mentions, “Y magazine reveals both self and text to be conceptions that recognize mutation and variation, rather than stable enduring works” (2004:448). This quote illustrates the perceived movement of which youth identities in post-apartheid South Africa articulate, which aptly relates to an understanding of syncretism characterized by movement, as Becquer and Gatti mention “Syncretic relations are, in this sense, traversed by a double movement of both alliance and critique. Syncretism involves neither a ‘flagrant compromise’, nor ‘uncritical acceptance’, but rather a process which articulates elements in a manner that modifies their intelligibility and transforms their combined spaces” (1997: 448). This chapter will now unpack an example from each of the three conventions used in YMAG to showcase the syncretic elements in the way the Y-Generation is styled.


This editorial is a conflation of two different types of magazine features - fashion editorial and celebrity interview - under the theme of gangsters and their style. There are two themes running simultaneously in this editorial; aesthetically the shoot is styled along the lines of 1950’s American gangsters, and in terms of the content it is dealing with Hip-Hop.

⁴ Refer to Figures 14 and 15.
Birth name: Utha. Alias and reason: LT, those are my initials. Comment on eMCees and the apparent beef in Mzansi Hip-hop: Everyone should just do what they do, and ultimately they’ll fly together. If you stay true to yourself and do what you do you’ll find people to work with. What about the Soweto via Brooklyn cats (people born and raised in Mzansi with American accents): I think if you rap in that American accent, it says that you still have to grow. There’s certain things you haven’t found out about yourself. Use of language in Hip-hop, how important is it and what role does it play? Very crucial, you need to be understood. If you are speaking in Umtata in things they won’t understand you, then you’d lost them. Are you working on a project? Yes I am. What vibe will it be on? Basically it’s a Hip-hop radio show that I’m hoping fully going to do with YFM. Favourite eMCee: Can it be two? Eastern Cape - Uzini goes by the name of Verbs and Sabs goes by the name of Black PH.

Figure 3: Hip-Hop Nation Gangsta Style- Litha (YMAG Dec/Jan 2003, Volume 5, Issue 42)- Photographer: Steve Tanchel, Art Director: Kassie Naidoo, Stylist: Shaldon Kopman

Detailed caption overleaf.
The editorial of which this shot is part of has been styled according to the theme of 1950’s American gangsters, reincarnated locally in Sophiatown style. This black and white image is of an emcee called Litha who has been captured doing what some might consider a ‘manly’ exercise of shaving with an old-fashioned perhaps even ‘vintage’ razor. There is a feeling of authenticity, as if the viewer has caught him shaving due to the soap that is still foamed on his face and throat and that he is without a shirt.

The two quotes superimposed on the image are lyrics from hip-hop songs. The one at the top is created by Litha himself and reads “Amacherry afana notywala soze uwaggqibe” (roughly translated as, “Girls are like beer, You’ll never finish them”) This quote reflects the portrayal of women in hip-hop in Loots’ criticism of the genre, that they are “imaged as little more than sex objects” (Loots 2003:68). Although it is not clear whether he is being sexually suggestive in this quote if one had to look at the shoot as a whole particularly at the two images of the women (Figures 5 & 7) the implication of sex is unavoidable. The second quote is by another local artist called Mischief, “This is what I saw in the middle of Y triangle reality bites its just life from all angles”. The significance of this quote is that due to Litha not looking at the camera rather downward, with his eyebrows raised as if he is looking into a mirror, probably to see where his razor is going, causes him to see what he is doing from a different angle.

The significance of having the interview with Litha underneath his picture is that the viewer can read it in conjunction with his image, his views and opinions about South African hip-hop. This insertion of the interview with the subject in the photograph is a convention that runs through the whole editorial except in the shots of the women (refer to Figures 5 & 7). In Litha’s interview as with the others (except the women) the first question is asking for a “birth name” and the second asks for an “alias and reason”, this shows the celebrity persona and image that comes with being part of hip-hop culture that a new image and name are adopted when one gets recognized in their chosen field i.e. as an emcee, DJ, graffiti artist or B-boy. In this interview with Litha there is particular reference to his opinion on the use of language and accents in South African hip-hop, which is a hotly contested subject in the pages of YMAG, where he believes that rapping in indigenous languages is important to “being understood”. When it comes to the use of accents he believes that those emcees who rap with American accents “still have to grow” i.e. they are immature and shows that “there are certain things that you haven’t found out about yourself”. This shows Litha’s adherence to forming a uniquely South African hip-hop genre which adheres to the global phenomenon in certain ways but also is appropriated into the post-apartheid South African context by the use of indigenous black languages and resisting the use of American accents when rapping.
Birth name: Tebagho Themba. Alias and reason: Pro. Verb. "Vocalise proverbs as short term grand truths. Can hip-hop be used to record history? Yes, because it's just vocalising what we experience anyway. It's like a written textbook, it's like a mouthpiece. If you weren't a rapper what would you do? Uh, I don't know, I only know how to be a rapper. Nothing else. Is kwaito Mzansi's answer to hip-hop? No, kwaito is Mzansi's work ethics for hip-hop. Are you ever going to release an album? Yeah, you realise that there's a whole lot of money issues, but yes I am going to.

Figure 4: Hip-Hop nation
Gansta style: Proverb


Detail caption overleaf.
Proverb is looking away from the lense to the left with an expressionless face. One is drawn to the design of his haircut, which looks like a mix-up of thin shaven lines across his skull, which is quite a trend at the moment- having an almost shaved head with a design shaved further into it. His hat is a mafia-styled hat placed at a slight slant, which is reminiscent of the Sophiatown pantsulas as well as 1950’s American gangsters, which according to Bogatsu were the inspiration for the pantsula style of dress (2003:9). What is interesting about his suit is the seshweshwe cravat worn underneath his shirt, which relates to the ‘culture jamming’ of which Nuttall refers to in her paper, namely that post-apartheid Y-Culture remakes and conflates cultural signifiers from the past into new understandings (Nuttall 2004:436). In terms of Proverb’s cravat, the fact that it is an item of clothing understood to be ‘posh’ and smart usually designed in expensive plain fabrics like silk or linen, designed in a fabric historically associated with domestic workers and rural black women (Motsemme in Nuttall 2004:437), exemplifies this ‘culture jamming’.

The superimposed quote at the bottom of the image is a rhyme created by Proverb, “Too many emcees are like somebody’s pregnant wife/ they take a whole nine months to deliver something with life”. This quote reflects the internal competition with emcees who continuously insult others in their lyrics, not specifically but elusively as Proverb has done. This is because what makes an emcee well-known and respected is how well they can rhyme and that those rhymes are meaningful to the listeners. This is reflected in his interview when he answers the question “Can hip-hop be used to record history?” and he replies, “Yes, because hip-hop just vocalises what we experience anyway, its like a spoken textbook, its like a mouthpiece”. This emphasizes how hip-hop is used as a means to communicate and express everyday experiences that listeners can relate to, which is further expressed in the reason why the emcee in question has chosen his ‘alias’ name, Proverb, because according to him ‘proverb’ “is a short term expressing the truth”. This is why there is vast competition between emcees as to who can deliver the most meaningful rhymes and win an audience over as their ability to tell ‘the truth’ is ultimately the deciding factor as to whether they are considered worthy artists.

Proverb also acknowledges the tense comparison and competition between hip-hop and kwaito, in saying that “kwaito is Mzansi’s wack excuse for hip-hop”, which is an opinion only justifiable now by the fact South African hip-hop has only in the last 3 years established itself to be a distinct genre. The result is that now there is strong competition between South African hip-hop and kwaito (having been the first post-apartheid genre of music) for the same youth market (refer to chapter five for a detailed description of this).
Birth name: Thomas Sabelo Meegene. Alias: Bad Boy T. Why hip-hop: Because I love what hip-hop is all about. Why did you stop playing at gigs: Because you have to go there and play "hip-hop" music. Club owners want Ja Rule and don't want people who wear tekkies "because it promotes gangsters". I mean really! Most underrated hip-hop DJs: Debor and Miggie, definitely. They are talented. Feelings on.Oh that scratch: I hate it. I don't know how to scratch but the whole concept of scratching is to create a new song and experiment, take your set to another level. It's not just to scratch for scratching's sake. What rap track makes you want to get right into your car and head home? Ja Rule "Always On Time" turns me off. Mission when it comes to Mzansi hip-hop: "You know when you go to a hot, hot summer party, there's a dude with an "all access" card with a kevzine table in one hand and in the other hand a double jack on the radio and everybody is all smiles when they see him. I wanna be that dude."
Figure 6: Hip-Hop Gangsta Style - Bad-Boy T

There is a sense of mystery in this image evoked by the fact the viewer cannot make out clearly the face underneath the straw hat, whose eyes are completely covered. The photograph is of one of the DJ’s of the Harambe show, Thomas Msengana a.k.a. Bad-Boy T. What is interesting about the way he has been styled is that besides from adhering to the ‘gangster’ theme with his Cuban styled hat, white suit and gold rings, around his neck is a “Zulu rope necklace” (credited on the side of the photograph amongst all the other items listed in the shot). The choice of this item in and amongst the other clothes and accessories of Bad-Boy T’s outfit illustrates the various sources that are drawn on to create this ‘gangster’ look.

Bad-Boy T’s feelings and opinions about hip-hop seem to speak to the glamour that has come to be associated with the genre, which is also a notion evident in the theme of American gangsters of which this editorial reflects. When reading his answers to the questions it becomes clear that as a DJ he is not involved with the music as an artist but rather as a purveyor who enjoys playing it. This is because he states in the interview, how he “hates” DJ’s who scratch, “I don’t know how to scratch”. The term scratching refers to the artistry involved in being a respected hip-hop DJ, unlike a radio DJ who just plays music. Scratching is creating a new sound by physically manipulating the vinyl record whilst it is playing. This is the art of hip-hop DJ’s, as Bad-Boy T says, “the whole concept of scratching is to create a new song and experiment”. His admission of not enjoying the method together with the fact that when asked the question “Mission when it comes to Mzansi hip-hop?” and he answers “You know when you go to a hot, hot summer party, there is a dude with an ‘all access’ card with a walkie talkie in one hand and in the other hand a double Jack on the rocks and everybody’s all smiles when they see him! I wanna be that dude!” are indicative of the glamour of middleclass blackness which Nuttall mentions (2004:438). This is important because it shows that although artistry is a fundamental part of hip-hop, in post-apartheid Y-Culture so is the glamour and aspirational aspect of it, which is why it has become a genre most associated with Y-Culture since the emergence of kwaito.
Both these themes originated in America but both have been absorbed into Y-Culture very successfully. The American gangster theme has had a long history in South African popular culture, in the form of pantsula style originating in Soshiatown (Dolby 2003:11), as Bogatsu notes. “Pantsulas (gangsters) were devoted to a sense of style and exhibited an unending preoccupation with their appearance. Much of the aesthetic and behavioural code of the tsotsi or pantsula is a product of the influence of American cinema and popular culture which is chosen in opposition to the social structure of apartheid South Africa” (2003:9). Hip-Hop as a genre of music is currently also finding its own expression in the field of South African popular culture. Therefore although both themes seem to have their initial beginnings in American popular culture, what is clear from these images is that both, in the case of the former, has, and in the case of hip-hop, is, finding expression as uniquely South African aspects of popular culture, with pantsulas already having a long history in South Africa and South African hip-hop becoming more and more established.

All of the men featured in the editorial are Hip-Hop celebrities in their own right, being either emcees\(^5\) or DJ’s. They have been interviewed about their perceptions of Hip-Hop as a genre in the landscape of South African youth culture and from their answers it becomes clear how the genre is really nurturing a unique South African identity and following. For example as the emcees in figures 3 and 4 (Litha and Proverb) say respectively:

YMAG: “Use of language in hip-hop, how important is it and what role does it play?”
Litha: “Very crucial, you need to be understood. If you are speaking in Umtata in twang they wont understand you, then you’ve lost them.”

YMAG: “Is kwaito Mzansi’s answer to hip-hop?”
Proverb: “No, no! Kwaito is Mzansi wack excuse for hip-hop.”

In the first case, Litha makes it clear how universal the genre has become in that it can be appropriated into any language (which is what Neate’s book is testament to) and by emceeing in an indigenous language the genre of South African hip-hop is able to

\(^5\) This refers to someone who raps (emcees) and has traditionally been thought of as one of the four basic elements of hip-hop. The other three include, deejaying, break-dancing (or b-boying) and graffiti art. For a description of these refer to Loots’ article Being a Bitch: Some questions on the gendered globalisation and consumption of American hip-hop urban culture in post-apartheid South Africa (2003:66).
differentiate itself from American hip-hop. In the second example, the uniqueness of South African hip-hop is further exacerbated by Proverb’s comment when it is compared to kwaito. This is important because as discussed in the previous chapter kwaito was initially perceived as an urban black genre of music in response to the post-apartheid context, which prompted comparisons to the origins of American hip-hop. But as Neate points out the most explicit comparisons between kwaito and hip-hop is in their style, as Neate notes of a kwaito music video, “watch a kwaito video and you would be forgiven for thinking you were watching the latest US emcee as one or other dude, swathed in hip-hop labels and festooned in chunky jewellery, fronts standard hip-hop mannerisms and showmanship for the camera” (Neate 2003:112).

All of the shots are portrait photographs in black and white that seems to stimulate a feeling of vintage as in the old photographs of 1950’s gangsters. The portrayal of these celebrities as such is indicative of the glamour of middleclass blackness of which Nuttall speaks about in relation to YMAG that “the emphasis is on the glamour and style of blackness” (2004:438). This is important when considering the notion of syncretism as being testament to “its element’s permeable boundaries” (Becquer and Gatti 1997:447), especially in reference to the emphasis on blackness. This is because, as Gilroy mentions, a consumer culture, such as Y-Culture, portrays a racialized glamour that promotes a non-specific, bodily difference, the result of which is “a fundamental lack of confidence in the power of the body to hold the boundaries of racial difference in place” (Gilroy 2000:21-22). Although YMAG is fundamentally aimed at urban black youths, young people from other racialized groups are able to partake in the glamour portrayed on the pages because as Gilroy has said that today’s visual culture has become more and more “depoliticized” because the images of “non-white beauty, grace and style” make the boundaries of race hard to decipher (Gilroy 2000:21-22).

Not only is this glamour and style seen in the images themselves but also in the clothes that the stylist has chosen to dress the celebrities in. One of the conventions in fashion editorials is listing the clothes in each shot as well as the shops they are from and how much each item costs. What becomes clear in this editorial is that the shops, which many
of the clothes come from, are exclusive boutiques such as Stoned Cherrie and Diesel and the price tags reflect this exclusivity.

What also gets communicated is that the glamour of this middle-class blackness, articulated through the exclusive shops that the clothes are from, and their adjoining price-tags, is that they are local labels as well as well known international ones. Here again the conflation between the global and the local in the labels attached to the various clothing items in an attempt to communicate ‘gangsta style’ but more so to illustrate the various sources black middle-class glamour draws on. For example Bad-Boy T’s outfit is compiled of a suit from Row-G (South African label) where the price “is on request”, a shirt from a shop Hi-Tek (originally from London) and his necklace is referred to as a “Zulu rope necklace” (figure 6).

Although the above indicates the various sources drawn on in the construction of style and glamour of the Y-Generation. It also implies that this glamour is aspirational, which is expressed in some of the interviews as well, as Bad-Boy T says in his interview (figure 6):

YMAG: “Mission when it comes to Mzansi Hip-Hop?”
Bad Boy T: “You know when you go to a hot, hot summer party, there is a dude with an ‘all access’ card with a walkie talkie in one hand and in the other hand a double Jack on the rocks and everybody is all smiles when they see him! I wanna be that dude!”

This is important because as Nuttall mentions, from the images in YMAG, it becomes clear that when it comes to constructing “stylizations of the self” which draw on many elements, there are obvious tensions between “actual emerging lifestyles of middle-class black youth and the politics of aspiration” (Nuttall 2004:439). It is this tension that is indicative of the syncretic space that the Y-Generation has created when it comes to their lifestyles because although middleclass lifestyles are an ideal and in many cases they might not be the reality for many participants of Y-Culture, there is still an ability to ascribe to such ideals. It is a movement between what Nuttall has called “actual emerging lifestyles” and “the politics of aspiration”, which are not contradictory, but rather antagonistic, as Becquér and Gatti note, “antagonistic relations, then, indicate the limits of absolutist conceptions of culture based upon a closed system of unalloyed, hetero-topic
Figure 5: Hip-Hop Gangsta Style

‘Groupie 99.2’

(YMAG Dec/Jan 2003, Volume 5, Issue 42) - Photographer: Steve Tanchel,
Art Director: Kassie Naidoo, Stylist: Shaldon Kopman

Detailed caption overleaf.
Figure 5: Hip-Hop Gangsta Style-‘Groupie 99.2’

This is the first of the only two women featured in the editorial (also refer to figure 7) who are not hip-hop artists but paid professional models. In fact nothing is known about them, there are no interviews or names given. In this particular shot she is only known as “Groupie 99.2”, which implies that this is what a typical YFM female hip-hop follower might look like. The look is overtly sexual with her top just covering her breasts and leaving very little to the imagination. Her glossy pouted lips and her discreet eye-contact with the camera further emphasize this point as well as the point made by Lianne Loots when it comes to the portrayal of women in hip-hop culture “women are imagined as little more than sex objects to be owned and won through ‘real’ men battling it out with guns for wealth and power” (Loots 2003:68). The word “groupie” also suggests this sexualized glamour that has come to be associated with hip-hop and rock ‘n roll with the idea of male celebrities having hoards of women running after them, as the result of their rise to fame.
Figure 7: Hip-Hop Gangsta Style- 'Groupie 241'


Detailed caption overleaf.
As opposed to figure five this image of 'groupie 241' is overtly sexual not only because it pictures the woman bare-breasted, but the fact that her torso is gleaming as if induced by sweat or lotion. This explicitness is counteracted by her facial expression and styling of the shot which is quite assertive i.e. the smirk on her face and cigarette dangling from her mouth as well as her mafia styling. This assertive characterization makes the fact that she is naked more acceptable because of her aggressive attitude. Her untamed hair contained by her hat further imply this attitude. Although this image adheres to Loots' point about women in hip-hop being conceived "as little more than sex objects to be owned and won through 'real' men battling it out with guns for wealth and power" (Loots 2003:68) what is evident in this photograph is that 'groupie 241' seems emasculated in her demeanor and expression as if she herself were a gangster like the rest of the men. This is perhaps why the fact of her breasts and 'sweaty' body being exposed is acceptable and therefore included in this editorial of gangsters and their style.
differences, and thereby expand the logics of struggle. Syncretic relations are, in this sense, traversed by a double movement of both alliance and critique” (Becquer & Gatti 1997:448).

There are two women featured in the editorial who are paid models to be in the shoot. On the photographs of these women are the words ‘Groupie 99.2’ (figure 5) and ‘Groupie 241’ (figure 7) with no interview or respective names of these female models. The suggestive word ‘groupie’ invokes images of young hysterical female fans that will do anything to spend time with their favourite male celebrities. One of the women featured in this editorial appears topless which drives this image of the ‘groupie’ even more.

Although gender is not a main focus of this paper, it is a theme that is pertinent. This particular editorial is a case in point. Lindy Zokufa the brand manager of Y mentioned it in our interview where she admits that Y MAG is gendered i.e. it appeals more to males: “Some of the features that we have both on radio and in the magazine actually speak to males even more. You know cos I would say here in SA there is not a lot of, let us say let us take the hip-hop genre, there is not a lot of hip-hop emcees- women emcees- so even b-boys. Like b-boys, break-dancing is more of a male thing and we cover those things in the magazine” (Appendix 3 Lindy Zokufa:4).

Lianne Loots’ article focuses on the issue of gender portrayal in hip-hop as a global genre and how this portrayal is articulated in South African hip-hop circles (Loots 2003), where she identifies blatant sexism in the genre of hip-hop and what this implies for its consumption “What has seldom been questioned is the way in which a large portion of American hip-hop in the form of rap, has been part of, and has informed, some of the worst mainstream gender and media stereotyping around male and female behaviour. Here women are imagined as little more than sex objects to be owned and won through ‘real’ men battling it out with guns for wealth and power” (Loots 2003:68). This editorial and its portrayal of women clearly exemplifies Loots’ argument about the sexist implications in hip-hop and even to an extent 1950’s American gangsters.

This editorial would fall under the second category mentioned above in that it is by its conventions a general fashion editorial i.e. no celebrities posing as models, and no
MEET THE PARENTS
The prodigal son returns with his Swedish girlfriend in tow.
We take a peek at her diary on Soweto

Figure 8: Meet the Parents- Arrival, Kliptown Station

This is the first image of this particular editorial, which has been conceived and styled along a specific post-apartheid storyline. This storyline is suggested in the title and subheading of the image “Meet the Parents: The prodigal son returns with his Swedish girlfriend in tow. We take a peek at her diary of Soweto”. From this title, description and image of the couple with all their bags, the “Swedish girlfriend” has been characterized as somewhat of an accessory to “the prodigal son” along with all the luggage ready to be welcomed by his family. However as the story progresses through the editorial it becomes clear that it is in fact the son who is the accessory and the focus is on the Swedish girlfriend’s diary of Soweto.

Although a completely fabricated story, this editorial is appealing for two reasons. Firstly because it is an idealized portrayal of a relationship that could probably only successfully occur in post-apartheid South Africa- the conflation of two historically different worlds, Swedish and South African, European and African, white and black. These are the same sets of dichotomies that gave rise to the post-colonial notion of hybridity but have a romanticized portrayal in this editorial. The reality check becomes evident right at the heart of the story-line, namely, why is the girlfriend not a white South African?

In this particular image, the couple comes across as very eclectic in their style, from her leopard print shoes and 80’s studded leather skirt, to his paisley scarf and checked formal pants. This eclecticism is further enhanced by them being a racially mixed couple from different parts of the world (according to the story), which reflects the stereotypes of what a typical young Swedish woman and South African man look like according to the producers of YMAG.

From this image one would not think that they are a romantically involved couple as the subheading suggests because of the way they are positioned. Although she is turned in ward towards him she is looking in the opposite direction with her head turned away from his looking longingly into the distance and her right foot forward as if ready to step further away from him. He on the other hand is standing square and stern holding two cases of luggage and looking straight into the camera with quite a serious look on his face. However as the story progresses so the viewer sees their interaction as a couple and her ‘easing-up’ to township life.

Township Experience

11.30. Picked up a few moments on the way to Themba's grandparents' house.

Zulu love letter - a gift from Themba.

Figure 9: Meet the Parents-Township Experience


Detailed caption overleaf.
Figure 9: Meet the Parents- Township Experience

This is the only image in the editorial that doesn't feature any models or clothes but is rather an insight onto the diary of the Swedish girlfriend. It has been styled as a collection of things that one would imagine to come from a someone's personal travel journal, in this case Olga the Swedish girlfriend. The significance of including this image is to emphasize the storyline and is also reflective of the often perceived clutter of township life that is a conflation of so many varying facets represented by the different items on display in this image- a "Zulu love letter", curry leaves, lion matches, sweet wrappers, a competition entry form and a photograph of the store where all these goods were purchased- all clearly indicated by Olga's hand-writing.
Figure 10: Meet the Parents-

Outside Themba’s Grandparents house

27 July 2003


Detailed caption overleaf.
Figure 10: Meet the Parents- Outside Themba’s Grandparents house

Although they are meant to be a couple the way they are standing in relation to each other seems distant. As the writing suggests the two people outside the house as well as the house itself emphasize the earlier point that the focus of this editorial is Olga the Swedish girlfriend and the township and the people who live their provide the context and storyline of the editorial. The blue colour of the house make the models clothes stand-out in contrast. The superimposed box of Rooibos Tea seems out of place in this image and has probably only been included because like most of the household products in this editorial, it is a uniquely South African product.
Figure 11: Meet the Parents - Samp and Beans Recipe


Detailed caption overleaf.
Figure 11: Meet the Parents- Samp and Beans Recipe

In this image we see how the gender roles are played out and constructed in 'township life'. Olga is standing over the stove preparing "samp and beans" probably for the first time as the superimposed handwriting of the recipe and packet of beans framing the photograph suggest. Themba's expression is one of surprise and for the first time the viewer sees him smiling as if he is so proud of his Swedish girlfriend's adaptation to living in Soweto. The woman in the background emphasizes this gendered role in her holding of a dish and grin on her face as if she is watching over the couple and Olga's attempt at making samp and beans, ready to assist the novice. The photograph is framed by more typically South African products. This image exemplifies the conflation of past and present in what could be an idealistic post-apartheid situation of a racially mixed couple who are young and style-conscious enjoying traditional South African food.
Figure 12: Meet the Parents - Washing Day


Detailed caption overleaf.
In this image the characterized gender role of Olga continues where the impression is that she has become accustomed to township life as the girlfriend of one of Soweto’s “prodigal sons” by doing the washing on “washing day”. By her hanging up the washing in what must be the yard of Themba’s family home reflects earlier comments to the effect that this is an idealistic story of how well the Swedish girlfriend has adapted to township life, perhaps even suggesting that if she can do it anyone can.

What also becomes evident in this image is how her style has become more reflective of the Afrochic trend as the story progresses, as Nuttall mentions of this trend “township culture is translated from a socioeconomically stagnant culture into a high-urban experience” (2004:437). Her dress reflects this by the detailed embroidery that lines the neckline and bottom edge of the dress in bright colours contrasted against her crisp white collar shirt worn underneath. The dress is from Stoned Cherrie which is significant in that they have been one of the pioneers of the Afrochic trend, as Nuttall has said about them, “Stoned Cherrie’s designs speak in several registers: in part they play on the taste for ‘retro’ (a current global trend in styling) by drawing on imagery from the past, parody images of the 1950’s as they brand images onto t-shirts, and invoke a nostalgia for the ‘location’” (2004:437). Not only does Olga’s dress reflect this revamped retro look but the fact that she is standing in her boyfriend’s family yard in Soweto hanging-up the washing exemplifies this style trend (Afrochic) and how it is accessible to anyone.
Figure 13: Meet the Parents - The Family


Detailed caption overleaf.
Figure 13: Meet the Parents- The Family

In this family photograph everyone is facing the camera and looking ahead except for what must be Themba's mother, she seems to be smiling at Olga as in figure eleven perhaps reiterating how proud she is of Olga's adaptation to township life. Familial hierarchy is evident in this image with what seems to be the grandparents seated and Themba's parents standing in the middle behind them. The implication of this arrangement is that of adherence of tradition contrasted against Themba's eclectic trendy clothes (bright striped shirt, seshweshwe cap and army print pants) and white girlfriend from Sweden. The most interesting item in his ensemble is his cap, which is a beret styled cap made of bright red seshweshwe cloth which as Nuttall mentions was initially a very gendered type of fabric, in that it was a cloth "worn by married women who were domestic servants or rural women working in the city" but that now it has "been recaptured, reinterpreted, and transformed into iconic fashion items on display in Rosebank" (Nuttall 2004:437). Olga's style has been veering more and more towards the Afrochic since the beginning of the editorial. In this image this is very obvious in her shirt and wooden beads she is wearing around her neck. The shirt is from Stoned Cherrie and features an image of a Drum Magazine cover, which was one of the first and oldest magazines aimed at black South Africans (Laden 2004). The importance of Stoned Cherrie reappropriating the magazine cover in a post-apartheid context as a fashionable item is that it was reminiscent of Sophiatown "the heart of Johannesburg's counterculture in the 1950's", which according to Nuttall "projected an expressly cosmopolitan target audience" (Nuttall 2004:436). Although Sophiatown doesn't exist today, this shirt with the image of Drum Magazine implies that the same cosmopolitan audience is found in townships like Soweto. By Olga wearing this shirt it suggests that Drum Magazine and all that it represents have become fashionable whether or not she understands or knows the context from where this image came.

From the fashion credits it becomes clear that the family's clothes are not important, only those of Olga and Themba, again hinting at the fact that the family are 'accessories' to the constructed story and form part of the backdrop of the editorial.
interviews. Having said this besides being primarily about fashion and clothes, it is also more like a visual story that looks like it has been taken out of a journal. The names of the models have even been made-up to fit in with the storyline, their real names are Claudia and Thami seen on the editorial credits.

The storyline is one that has resonance with post-apartheid South Africa being a global contender and tells the story of a young Sowetan man returning home from Europe with his Swedish girlfriend, with the subtitle “The prodigal son returns home with his Swedish girlfriend in tow. We take a peek into her diary on Soweto” (figure 8). Besides from the photographs of the models wearing the latest fashions, there are scribbles on the photographs as to where the photograph was shot and the date, for example figure 10 has handwritten in the upper left hand corner “outside Thembu’s grandparents house, Dube, 29 July 2003”. There are also some pages which do not feature any clothes or models at all but are compiled as a collage of the various memorabilia that ‘Olga’ the Swedish girlfriend has collected, from sweet wrappers to Lion matches (figure 9) to a recipe for Samp and Beans (figure 11).

There are also images of everyday products that form part of the overall images like Freshpak Rooibos tea (figure 10), King Korn Maize, Lucky Star Sardines (figure 11), Omo Washing powder (figure 12) and Castle Lager (figure 11). In the context of the fashion shoot and the clothes the use of these products as part of the final editorial illustrate the everyday mundane things that make life in the township work despite the aspirational aesthetic of this shoot- the happy in-love cross-cultural, cross-racial couple. The Swedish girlfriend and her experience is the focus of the shoot, Thembu the boyfriend, the township and his family provide the context for a storyline which although possible has been employed because of its surreal almost exceptional possibility.

The element that makes it seem like a depiction of everyday life is in fact the clothes, which make the models seem like any fashion conscious young South African couple. There are garments that even portray the ‘Afrochic’ phenomenon worn by ‘Olga’, such as the Drum T-shirt (from Stoned Cherrie; figure 13) and the traditional embroidery on her
dress (Stoned Cherrie: figure 12). The relevance of these garments is that although they form part of the ‘Afrochic’ trend, which draws on traditional African fabrics and designs, they do not seem out of place on Olga from Sweden.

Although a completely fabricated story, this editorial is appealing for two reasons. Firstly because it is an idealized portrayal of a relationship that could probably only successfully occur in post-apartheid South Africa - the conflation of two historically different worlds, Swedish and South African, European and African, white and black. These are the same sets of dichotomies that gave rise to the post-colonial notion of hybridity but have a romanticized portrayal in this editorial. The reality check becomes evident right at the heart of the story line, namely, why is the girlfriend not a white South African? My speculation is that, perhaps a racially mixed South African couple is too idealistic, or maybe it would be a storyline that has become too boring and overdone for the readers of YMAG, and hence to make it more interesting the editors and art directors opted for not only a racially mixed couple but a ‘nationality’ mixed one too.

The second reason of the editorial’s appeal lies in its aesthetic ensemble, namely, the clothes, styling of the models and the use of everyday household products. The clothes and the way they have been put together make the shoot seem like a depiction of everyday post-apartheid life in terms of the models looking like any youths one would see at a club or a mall. This together with the uniquely South African products make it even more so a relative reflection of South African urban middle-class life, which includes township life and culture, as Breamer mentions regarding black elites who have middleclass values and preoccupations, “yet a relationship with the culture of township life is maintained” (Breamer in Nuttall & Mbembe 2004:359).

The fact is, although the dichotomies discussed above have been employed in this editorial purely for their contradictory appearance, which have added a romanticized element to the storyline, what is communicated is that they are antagonistic. There is movement and permeability between these seemingly ‘opposites’ done through the clothes and styling. This exemplifies the syncretism of these various elements as
antagonistic in their identities yet permeable when it comes to their interaction and movement (Becquer and Gatti 1997:447).

This editorial features a young up and coming fashion designer, Pierre Du Plessis under the title ‘The Puppet Master’. This is due to his first showcased collection being inspired by dolls and as the article says was “also about the theatre of fashion” (figure 14).

When reading the article it becomes clear that the designer draws on Afrikaans culture for inspiration in his collection from the style of clothes to the choice of models as he says, “I actually pick models who look Afrikaans with their stout gesig (naughty faces). Butch guys who look strong but at the same time are quite pathetic. Girls who look quite submissive whereas they are really backstabbing bitches at the same time. I think it is interesting playing with those contrasts” (figure 15).

Here again the issue of gender emerges, except in regards to this editorial the intention is meant to be reflective of the perceived stereotypical Afrikaans woman. The artist accounts for this and makes it clear that this stereotype is what he wanted purposefully to portray. In the earlier discussion on hip-hop style, when it comes to hip-hop as a consumer culture it is taken as a given that women are depicted as sex objects (Loots 2003) and in this editorial and from the images women as sex objects is not necessarily the intended portrayal but rather women as passive and perhaps neglected (as discussed in the captions for figures 14 & 15).

This article is testimony to the fact that although the designer is white and Afrikaans, he is included in the Y-Generation (generally perceived as being the domain of black middle class youth), which gets conflated with the designer’s struggles pertaining to issues of being African as well as white as he says in the article, “Being in Europe you realize how South Africa contrasts with that. We have a lot more soul, it was interesting for me to be
THE PUPPET MASTER

Pierre du Plessis wooed the fashion pack last year at SA Fashion Week with his first show, which was much more than just about the clothes, but also about the theatre of fashion.

"I actually pick models who look Afrikaans with their stout gesigle (naughty faces). Butch guys who look strong but at the same time they're quite pathetic. Girls who look quite submissive whereas they're really backstabbing bitches at the same time. I think it is interesting, playing with those contrasts."

Figures 14 and 15: The Puppet Master

Figures 14 and 15: The Puppet Master

In these two images, the model is styled like a puppet doll to cohere with the printed description of the designer’s show (on Figure 14) being about “the theatre of fashion”, and in this case puppet theatre, which is accentuated by the real puppets hanging from strings. In both images the model’s face is almost expressionless like the actual puppets in the shot and her arms look stiff and rigid as if they have been positioned as such. The metaphor here is two-fold; firstly when it comes to dolls or puppets they are passive and hence like blank canvases, which can be dressed and made to look and do exactly what the puppet master wants as he manipulates them. Secondly this metaphor reiterates his portrayal of gender stereotypes in his clothes, specifically those of Afrikaans women as he mentions in the text of the article (printed onto Figure 15), “I actually pick models who look Afrikaans with their stout gesigte (naughty faces). Butch guys who look strong but at the same time they’re quite pathetic. Girls who look quite submissive whereas they’re really backstabbing bitches at the same time”. It is interesting to note that in this four page editorial feature there are no images with male models only one of the designer himself, Pierre Du Plessis. There are only photographs of the same white female model with pigtails, dressed in the designer’s garments which are modest and together with the styling of the images imply a childlike innocence.

In the first image (Figure 14) the model is wearing a plain button-up blouse which is not figure hugging but loose, together with an a-line calf length skirt which also does not accentuate her shape. The look is modest and neat but if one had to look closer one would see the loose threads on the edging of the shirt and the skirt (also on the dress in Figure 15), which reflect one of the aims of the designer in his clothes and use of the ‘puppet theme’ that they (clothes and dolls) are meant to look “Quite sweet and innocent and at the same time quite insane. From playing with a doll, hugging it and dragging it behind you it starts getting a different kind of beauty to it, more than just a painted face. A kind of beauty coming from it being used and loved so much” (Jun/Jul 2003, Vol. 5, Issue 44:68). What the designer emphasizes here isn’t necessarily reflective of love but also of neglect and perhaps even abuse as he goes on to say “Thus the models were styled as broken dolls, with an eyelash missing here, a scar on a cheek there while hair was twisted and knotted” (Jun/Jul 2003, Vol. 5, Issue 44:68). The fact that he has used an adult woman model to exemplify this and not a male model illustrates his use of gender stereotypes as a theme in his designs.

In both images the old Victorian style clothes of the puppets contrasts those of the model especially in Figure 14 where her simple blouse is made of seshweshwe fabric and her skirt from denim with a floral lining to create a look that epitomizes Y-Style and the Afrochic trend. The significance of the seshweshwe cloth as being fashionable has already been discussed but in conjunction with this image and the designer’s focus on Afrikaans culture, in the words of the designer “Being in Europe you realize how South Africa contrasts with that. We have a lot more soul, it was interesting for me to be there, it made me a lot more patriotic. Whenever there is a struggle in a certain place, I believe art and design flourishes” (Jun/Jul 2003, Vol. 5, Issue 44:68). Here again the conflation of two very different worlds through the aesthetic ensemble of the clothes- the conservative button-up blouse and the seshweshwe cloth and a-line denim skirt with torn patch- in a way that transcends the cultural fixities of these two opposing styles and makes their perceived boundaries permeable.
there, it made me a lot more patriotic. Whenever there is a struggle in a certain place, I believe art and design flourishes” (Jun/Jul 2003, Vol. 5, Issue 45:68).

His struggles are of occupying the often perceived contradictory space implied by the notion of syncretism of him being Afrikaans and yet part of the Y-Genration and hence being able to participate in the flourishing aspirations of post-apartheid youth. This gets further exacerbated by his clothing, namely that the styles are rather conservative and would be likened to traditional Afrikaans fashion, yet the fabrics chosen are of seshweshwe cloth, which have a specific traditional association as being worn by black domestic workers or rural women who are married (Motsemme in Nuttall 2004:437). Here again the conflation of two very different worlds through the aesthetic ensemble of the clothes- the conservative button-up blouse and the seshweshwe cloth in a way that transcends the cultural fixities of these two opposing styles and makes their perceived boundaries permeable.

**Syncretism as the Preferred Theory**

What I have attempted to illustrate in this chapter is how the notion of hybridity is insufficient in the understanding of Y-Culture, through the publication YMAG. This is because YMAG is an outlet for the expression of a growing youth culture that is more than just a product of the post-colonial context, or more so, post-apartheid. Rather that it is a defiant cultural phenomenon that refuses to be caught up in the binaries and dichotomies as a result of such a context.

This phenomenon known as Y-Culture draws on many sources in its ability to construct youth identities that get reflected in the pages of YMAG, which as Nuttall mentions is a “youth cultural stance invested in resisting master narratives of ‘who we are’” (2004:443). The notion of syncretism allows this resistance to exist as Y-Culture is continuously permeating boundaries and identities already perceived as fixed and is hence always on the move and transforming.
From the article content, to the lay-out of the magazine, to the various fashion editorial conventions, YMAG is a conflation of various sources of inspiration and fashion publication conventions. The result is an artefact representing the diversity, locally and globally, of the vast array of resources that the Y-Generation have access to. This is something only possible in a post-apartheid context.
CHAPTER SEVEN:
READING Y-STYLE

The Y-Shoppe

While one can get a relatively good idea of the style of the Y-Generation by paging through the magazine, nowhere is it more explicitly defined than on the clothing rails and counters in the Y-Shoppe. As mentioned previously the Y-Shoppe came about when YFM moved to the Zone, and being located in the hub of a shopping mall specifically designed to attract a youth market able to spend, the need for some kind of merchandise outlet emerged.

The Y-Shoppe not only sells Y merchandise but also the designs and garments from up-and-coming young designers, who have their own labels. Although they remain independent designers, by their inclusion into the Y-Shoppe they set the criteria of how the Y-Generation should be styled or reflect Y-Style. The term ‘Y-Style’ is a good term to use when referring to how the Y-Generation are styled and the producers of YMAG have given this term due recognition by defining it in their YMAG Fashion Show pamphlet (Appendix B) as “the young and wild at heart, cutting-edge, street-smart global, yet purely African and individualistic”.

The pamphlet itself features three South African designers and their ranges who epitomize Y-Style, and who were included in the YMAG fashion show at Cape Town Fashion Week in 2004: Life by Aadre Martin, Magents, and Stoned Cherrie. The description of each of these labels reflects the conflation of African and global style aesthetics and trends when it comes to the target audience of each label. For example, in the description of the label Life it says “This soulful label has all the right ingredients to take South African fashion to the best parts of the world”. Similarly in the description of the Magents label it is aimed at “Individuals who live a lifestyle that can be placed anywhere around the globe and immediately blend in with a similar group in that particular culture… Magents lifestyle apparel is South African based but is available in
selected retail stores, including the Y-Shoppe at the Zone in Rosebank, in Europe and soon in the USA”. The description of Stoned Cherrie is no different but focuses more on the Afrocentric appeal of the clothes, “The brand affirms itself through the idea of boldly moving forward, daring to be different and daring to be proud to be African, making it a unique African-urban brand. Stoned Cherrie collections are a rampant celebration of South African street culture- a celebration of freedom”.

The word ‘cherrie’ means girlfriend in township lingo (Scamtho Dictionary, Matshegoa 2004:3), which clearly shows that Y-Style draws its inspiration, amongst other things, from township culture although Stoned Cherrie itself is located in the suburbs. Bogatsu mentions this by saying that post-1994 “it is now ‘cool’ to be able to communicate in tsotsi-taal (township slang); hang-out ‘back home in the ghetto’ eating the ‘township burger’ or kota (bunay chow). Being proudly township has become the equivalent of being proud of a unique South African experience” (2003:5).

The point about the above-mentioned designers being part of Y-Style is that they are well established and have their own shops and boutiques throughout the country. This indicates that Y-Style does not begin and end with the Y-Shoppe but rather that in its association with YFM and YMAG it communicates an archetype of what Y-Style is about, a conflation of suburb and township, the local and the global. The Y-Shoppe then besides from being a boutique featuring designs and garments from various young designers, it is also a projection of what constitutes Y-Style, namely to be part of the Y-Generation is no longer only about listening to the radio station or reading the magazine but also about looking the part. The importance of this can even be seen in the location of the Y-Shoppe, it acts as a barrier between the internal studios of the station and the outside world that is, to get to the studios one has to walk through the shop and is forced to consume (visually) Y-Style.

The importance of Y-Style and how it can be read is what this chapter focuses on in discerning the limits of Hebdige’s theory of subculture, which is primarily concerned with style, and how style in its ensemble creates a “noise” (Hebdige 1979:133). Through
a reading of some merchandise sold in the Y-Shoppe I hope to answer the question, ‘how can style in Y-Culture be read?’

The Difference Between Fashion and Style

In his visually appealing book, Ted Polhemus distinguishes fashion and style, by saying that fashion is fickle, it changes and fluctuates all the time and reflects what is considered the norm (1996:19). Style on the other hand is enduring and timeless and reflects “personal, individualistic difference” (1996:19). He locates this distinction within the bigger discursive one of modernity and post-modernity, saying that in line with the inevitable processes of modernity, fashion continuously changes and progresses and “gave immediate, visual, everyday expression to the modernist worldview” and consequently to not conform to what is fashionable is “to be outside of history and progress” (Polhemus 1996:25). However after the 1980’s, according to Polhemus, this changed and non-conformity became fashionable, which saw the shift to style “with its emphasis on constancy and pluralistic diversity” (Polhemus 1996:28).

David Muggleton speaks about the important distinction between fashion and style in terms of the distinction between modernism and post-modernism, where he says, “In contrast to a modernism of purity, functionality and utilitarianism, to be fashionable in postmodernism is to involve oneself in aesthetic play, with the focus on hedonism, pleasure and spectacle, “a return to ornament, decoration and stylistic eclecticism”” (Muggleton 2000:38). He goes on to further say that the important distinction between modernism and post-modernism when it comes to style is that the former was based on “the clear demarcation of specific social groups, each with its own style boundaries” whereas the latter involves a dissolving of these boundaries and “fragmentation of mass identities” (2000: 41). The result of this fragmentation is a whole selection of signs which enable the consumer to become a bricoleur and subsequently “as commodity production, exchange, and creative appropriation intensify, signs become free-floating, travelling towards the point at which they become irrevocably divorced from their original cultural contexts” (Muggleton 2000:43).
Both authors connect post-modernism to developments beginning in the 1980’s. Where Polhemus equates modernity with fashion and postmodernity with style, Muggleton on the other hand does not make such simplistic associations and differentiations but rather boils down the distinction between modernism and post-modernism in terms of style, to the post-modern condition of fragmentation, emphasizing the importance of signs.

Muggleton’s understanding of style is therefore more insightful when coming to terms with Y-Style. This is not to say that Polhemus’ summation of modernity/fashion and post-modernity/style is not useful but rather that it confuses the distinction between fashion and style. In attempting to answer the main research question pertaining to this chapter, it will be necessary to show that Y-Style draws on the notion of fragmentation being a condition of post-modernism that is, emerging after the 1980’s, as well as global fashionable trends.

Reinventing the Past (refer to figures 16 and 17)

This women’s t-shirt is in its design a very fashionable garment. It reflects the current trend at the moment of 80’s inspired fashion with the waist band at the bottom of the shirt. The result of this waste-band is a ‘slouchy’ look, one that is not necessarily loose but that the waist-band at the bottom gathers the edge of the shirt causing it to sit on the hips. This convention of the waist-band is usually accompanied by an unedged or loose neckline causing the shirt to fall off the shoulders (not in this shirt), which is an inversion of the traditional design of a t-shirt being edged around the neck and loose at the bottom. Polhemus talks about the 1980’s as being a turning point in “our attitudes towards fashion”, where he says that “to describe someone as trendy was a put-down rather than a complement. Anyone who reflexively jumped on the latest bandwagon was branded a ‘fashion victim’. Suddenly, in other words, fashion went out of fashion” (1996:25-27). This could explain how the simple design of the t-shirt became inverted and hence a signifier of eighties style. The result is that this shirt is loose but the waist-band at the bottom counteracts this and accentuates the hips.
Figure 16: Children are innocent (taken on 11/04/2005)

Detailed caption overleaf.
Figure 16: Children are Innocent (taken on 11/04/2005)

The printed image on this shirt looks like it was originally a photograph of a black child holding what looks like the steering wheel of a toy car. The shading of the print makes the features and clothes of the child discernable but it is hard to tell whether it is male or female. What is clear though is that the child is young probably not more than seven or eight years old and is smiling at whoever has taken the picture. The viewer has no reason to doubt the happiness of the child at this moment however read in conjunction with the font one wonders why the viewer or even the one purchasing this garment needs to be reminded that “children are innocent”. The word “Abantu” means ‘people’ in Zulu and it being in bold capital font framing the image of the child draws the viewer attention to it. The phrase “children are innocent” is written in a font that looks like handwriting and together with the image looks like it could be a handwritten caption for the image. I have my own ideas about this image, which is influenced by myself being a participant of Y-Culture. When I photographed it at the Y-Shoppe the first association I made was to the 1976 Soweto Uprisings, which I think was a result of being at the Zone and surrounded by Y-Culture. This is important when considering this image because my perception of it was influenced by the fact of Y-Culture being able to reinvent images from the past, as Bogatsu mentions in a discussion about Loxion Kulcha, “The use of stylistic registers from the past represents an attempt to grapple with persistent social contradictions common to both periods... This invocation of older idioms is also an attempt to play with and ‘remix’ historical discourses. Like much urban youth culture of which it forms a part, the LK (Loxion Kulcha) range resituates these older discourses, both freeing them of older and more rigid meanings and investing them with new ones that recognise the persistent social contradictions to which these discourses have reference” (Bogatsu 2003:2). It is such persistent “social contradictions” which made me associate this image on this shirt with the 1976 Soweto uprisings because the emergence of YFM and Y-Culture contradict the victimization of black school children which was the motivation of the unrest. YFM and Y-Culture are a celebration of being young in post-apartheid South Africa as well as being black.
This is what the shirt looks like on display in the Y-Shoppe. It comes with a matching skirt (behind it) and together with it being salmon pink suggests it is for women. There is a bright yellow sticker on it showing its price, R200, which seems quite expensive for a shirt, which was my initial reaction. The shirt seems to be quite loose fitting and casual with an extended neck lining in the shape of a 'v' which points straight at the image. What becomes clear is that the image is not in the centre of the shirt but more towards the bottom half of it so that when worn would probably lie on lower abdomen of the wearer. Hence being a garment for women there is an association of the image of the child with the womb and the innocence and need for protection of young children and babies. The waistband at the bottom has become a fashionable trend over the last couple of years, reminiscent of a trend from the eighties, where woman's t-shirts were not necessarily loose but had a waistband at the bottom gathering the edge of the shirt causing it to sit on the hips. The result of this being a 'slouchy' look usually accompanied by an unedged or loose neck-line causing the shirt to fall off the shoulders (not in this shirt). This was an inversion of the traditional design of a t-shirt being edged around the neck and loose at the bottom. Pothemos talks about the 1980's as being a turning point in "our attitudes towards fashion", where he says that "to describe someone as trendy was a put-down rather than a complement. Suddenly, anyone who reflexively jumped on the latest bandwagon was branded a 'fashion victim'. Suddenly, in other words, fashion went out of fashion" (1996:25-27). This could explain how the simple design of the t-shirt became inverted and hence a signifier of eighties style. The result is that this shirt is loose but the waistband at the bottom counteracts this and accentuates the hips.
Polhemus believes that the 1980’s or more specifically, “Post-Punk”, was when modernism ended and hence fashion was now a matter of selection from a whole array of choices (1996:54-55). He also goes on to say that since the 1980’s fashion has had no originality, it continually reinvents the past and although modernism, according to him, is dead, “fashion today exists and moves ‘forward’ by recycling itself” (1996:76). Although Polhemus speaks about punk it must be remembered that when it came to eighties fashion and style, it was not only about punk, there were other influences like the emerging hip-hop and break-dancing scene with their glamourization of sportswear. Therefore when it comes to drawing on decades gone by for fashion trends they all get lumped together as eighties style or fashion. This is clear from figures 16 and 17, although one would not immediately associate the t-shirt with punk one can see its likeness to eighties fashion.

This reinvention of the past is an important theme that runs through Y-Culture, as discussed in the previous chapter. In line with the focus of this chapter, style and fashion, reinventing the past is a convention that is arguably fashion itself, where every season the ‘hot new look’ is inspired by a previous decade. According to Polhemus this shows how fashion reduces “whole decades to a visual shorthand that possesses no historical roots: aesthetic codes bereft of actual substantive events, decoupled from both time and place” (1996:76).

When it comes to Y-Culture, and specifically Y-style, this reinvention of the past is much more than a fashion convention but rather a fundamental principle and hence goes counter to this prior quote of Polhemus, as Nutall writes, “The way post-apartheid youth engage with the world has been shaped by often violent histories of international connection and by the fact of apartheid South Africa’s international isolation” (2004:441). As mentioned previously Bogatsu also discusses references to the past but unlike Polhemus who believes that such references show “no historical roots” Bogatsu’s discussion on Loxion Kulcha argues the opposite. Bogatsu says that in terms of style “the use of stylistic registers from the past represents an attempt to grapple with persistent social contradictions common to both periods, namely the era from which the idioms are drawn and the present” (2003:2).
The fact that post-apartheid youths, and specifically those of Y-Culture have strong ties to the past when it comes to asserting their post-apartheid position is also mentioned in Dolby’s book where the opening paragraph of the first chapter in her book describes this position in a rather emotive way, “The terrain on which these children grew and continue to grow up, is substantially different from that of their parents and even their older siblings. They are a generation whose past, present and future are neither completely defined by apartheid nor completely free of it” (2001:7). It becomes clear that Y-Style reflects both Polhemus’ and Bogatsu’s sentiments; firstly, when it comes to global fashion trends Polhemus’ statement of fashion being dissociated from time and place is evident, and secondly, Bogatsu’s claim, which not only reflects the post-apartheid clothing label Loxion Kulcha but also that of Y-Style.

Nowhere is the connection to the past more evident than when it comes to Y-Style, commercially in terms of style, such as the garment above, but more importantly this connection is conveyed through an array of messages/signs such as the one on the t-shirt in figures sixteen and seventeen, “Abantu1. The Children are Innocent”. When one looks at the photographed image of a young black child together with the printed words, it is reminiscent of images one probably would have seen during the aftermath of the 1976 Soweto uprising2. Since the adoption of democracy in 1994, it was this event eighteen years prior that was seen to be the catalyst to change in the living conditions of South Africa’s urban black population. It was this event that created a generational awareness that has been the focus of much of the post-apartheid era in the realm of popular culture-finding expression through notions such as the Rainbow Nation (the first generation who experienced non-racial legislation and hence integrated multiculturalism); Simunye: We are One (the first SABC campaign after the 1994 elections), the introduction of ample youth programming such as YoTV (SABC1) and the Learning Channel (SABC 3), the newspaper supplements aimed at youth such as LoveLife (specifically dealing with

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1 Abantu means ‘people’ in Zulu.
2 This is what came to my mind when I first saw this garment.
HIV/AIDS and issues pertaining to sex) and the S’Camto Live supplement; and finally the ultimate focus on youth and youth culture - YFM and Y-Culture.

The focus on youth in the post-apartheid era has been influenced by the events of 1976 and stories and images such as that of Hector Peterson. What this means is that these children are free to ‘cut ‘n paste’ and take from the past what they feel is necessary in the assertion of their post-apartheid youth identities.

Although most of the Y-generation were not even born in 1976 the importance of the event and its ramifications for their generation are recognized even if (in what this shirt arguably represents) it is for aesthetic value on the front of a t-shirt, or because it is ‘cool’ to be conscious to some degree of what happened in this country’s past. The message then that this t-shirt and its signs (the design of the garment as well as the image and the text) communicates is not only one of being accountable to the generation of youths who suffered for the freedom of the Y-generation, or, one showing that they are fashion conscious and up-to date with the latest eighties trend, or even one of being black and proud. What is communicated rather is that all these messages are ‘cool’ and stylish and together they tell the world that the one wearing it has a certain style. This style is a combination of all these fragments, the eighties trend, drawing on the political past of this country, and being proud.

This pastiche of these fragments in a marketable garment could only be possible in the context of post-apartheid. Y-style therefore communicates that being part of the Y-Generation and Y-Culture means an awareness of this country’s political history, with a particular emphasis on youth, as well as being aware of global trends of what is considered fashionable in terms of the actual design of clothing (in reference to figures sixteen and seventeen this is the current eighties trend). All of these together epitomize what it means to have style and be ‘cool’ as a post-apartheid youth.

Fragmentation (refer to figure 18)
Figure 18: Mama Thandi’s (taken on 11/04/2005)

This is a men’s shirt and by it being displayed folded, suggests that it probably doesn’t have any special design features otherwise it would be hanging on a rail like the shirt in Figure 1. The picture is of a black traditional ‘potjie’ with the word’s “Mama Thandi’s” printed on it in white with “traditional African Food” printed in red, “Soweto” in green and “South Africa” in black. The shirt looks like a piece of memorabilia from such a place called “Mama Thandi’s” such as “been there got the t-shirt’ and creates an image of “Mama Thandi’s” as being a top destination when in South Africa. Besides the various colours used what is more interesting is the different size fonts of the print; “Mama”, “traditional” and “South Africa” are much smaller than”Thandi’s”, “African Food” and “Soweto” making these latter three, specifically “Soweto” stand-out. So that when the viewer takes a glance at this shirt the phrase “Thandi’s African Food Soweto” is the most readable. The reason perhaps is that the words “Mama”, “traditional” and “South Africa” don’t evoke an image of a young urban cultural discourse especially used together which could hark to stereotypical images of a traditional old domestic worker cooking to make a living in apartheid South Africa. If one had to consider the phrase that stands out “Thandi’s African Food Soweto” quite a different image is created. Firstly the use of the word “African” as opposed to South African implies that there are many kinds of African food are on offer, not only South African. This makes Mama Thandis seem like a destination for anyone travelling in Africa. The word “Soweto” is the biggest in size and together with the shirt imply that one cannot go to Soweto without going to “Mama Thandi’s”. The word stands out the most and in it the message that is being conveyed is that due to its tumultuous past Soweto has become, historically the most famous location of working-class oppressed people in the world. This is not the case now, in fact Soweto itself is demarcated into areas that are thought to be more reflective of middle-class suburbia than a working-class township, which is possibly what inspired this t-shirt, namely, that this t-shirt sold as a fashionable item in a mall in the heart of Johannesburg’s northern suburbs and home to the middle-class families of the city, is testament to the fact that Soweto confronts such stereotypes. This is something only made possible by the Y-Generation who effectively after apartheid were able to bring the township into suburbia and made it part of the conceptualization of Johannesburg as an urban metropolis. Nuttall and Mbenbe have written about this (2004:360), quoting Lindsay Bremner, that post-apartheid Johannesburg is a place of “messy intersections and overlapping realities. Ordinary, everyday lives, which were excluded from the city by western urban management practices, town planning codes or by the legal administrative apparatus of apartheid, have brought distant geographical, social and cultural worlds into contact” (Bremner 2004:46,115).
Whereas the message/sign on the women’s t-shirt in figures sixteen and seventeen suggests time when black youth were the most victimized in this country, yet the most vigilant in attempting to change the political and social environment, the one on this men’s t-shirt is of a place with an equally charged political history.

In terms of a fashion aesthetic, this t-shirt is simple in its design i.e. not being classified in terms of a certain trend or decade of clothing styles. The message/sign it conveys transgresses its ‘lack’ of fashion appeal or ordinariness, it is the message/sign which gives it style, namely one that is “young and wild at heart, cutting-edge, street-smart global, yet purely African and individualistic” style (Appendix 3: YMAG Fashion Show Pamphlet, Aug 2004).

The word that stands out the most, is Soweto and in it the message that is being conveyed is that due to its tumultuous past Soweto has become, arguably the most famous location of working-class oppressed people in the world. Today, however this is not the case, in fact Soweto itself is demarcated into areas that are thought to be more reflective of middle-class suburbia than a working-class township. This t-shirt sold as a fashionable item in a mall in the heart of Johannesburg’s northern suburbs and home to the middle-class families of the city, is testament to the fact that Soweto has become well known and confronts such stereotypes. This is something only made possible by the Y-Generation who effectively after apartheid were able to bring the township into suburbia and made it part of the conceptualization of Johannesburg as an urban metropolis, as Nattall and Mbembe have written (2004:360), quoting Lindsay Bremner. that post-apartheid Johannesburg is a place of “messy intersections and overlapping realities. Ordinary, everyday lives, which were excluded from the city by western urban management practices, town planning codes or by the legal administrative apparatus of apartheid, have brought distant geographical, social and cultural worlds into contact” (Bremner 2004:46,115).

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3 For an insightful account into the everyday life of Soweto read the article Soweto Now, a conversation between Achille Mbembe, Ntsizwa Dlamini, and Grace Khunou in Johannesburg, The Elusive Metropolis: The Public Culture Journal Vol 16 No.4(eds) Mbembe, A & Nuttall, S.
Concerning Soweto Greg Maloka says in his interview,

“Soweto is Johannesburg really, you know... It evolved to be a stage to be heard from and I think a whole new culture was born cos people sort of united in this area. And even though in '48 when apartheid was instituted and you know you had the group areas act, and people moved to different areas and grew up in various different zones and stuff, the essence of it being a real urban area did not die” (Appendix 1.4.4).

Although Soweto is part of what gives Johannesburg it’s cool and hip alias, ‘Jozi’, the phrase “traditional African food”, is probably a less formal more youth accommodating way of expressing the importance of community customs and values which gives the place a certain character. This could be interpreted as Soweto having a certain degree of authenticity to it, which according to Polhemus is the inspiration for fashion trends, the search for authenticity (Polhemus 1996:81). The implication here is that although Soweto has become glamourized it still retains its historical baggage and deep connection to those who went before who were more conscious of community, tradition, and values than the Y-Generation. This is not to suggest that the Y-Generation are not concerned with tradition and customs but that the generations that went before them didn’t have a thriving youth culture that was equally even more so important, to them than tradition and custom. As Dlamini mentions in her discussion Soweto Now, “Young people are less political and more excited about life and about the world in general. People are keen to make it for themselves” (Dlamini, Membre & Khunou 2004:501).

The relevance of this t-shirt is that it clearly indicates that Soweto is a place that has a very deep-rooted history of marginalization and discrimination and hence is conceived of in a very specific way in the imaginations of many South Africans. However in the everyday lives of many who experience Soweto, it is a place of real-lived urban realities that mostly reflect the bigger metropolis of which it forms part of and in other ways contradicts these realities. Mbembe writes about this in the introduction of his paper entitled Soweto Now, where he says that up to date all research, and other literary material that has been conducted on and written about Soweto has focused on the dated stereotypes of it being a place of poverty, dispossession, discrimination and violence.
One such example stood out when conducting this research because it took for granted the fact that these sorts of fixations and stereotypes of Soweto are empirical fact. It was a book written by a journalist Heidi Holland entitled *Born in Soweto*. In the preface she writes in bold “Readers who are familiar with South African politics that gave rise to townships like Soweto may prefer to page past this first section, intended for those who have little background knowledge”. The first paragraph underneath this reads, “Soweto is a vast, impoverished and violent city that epitomises downtrodden black South Africa” (1994:1). This is problematic as Mbenbe points out that such references, in literary or academic accounts, fail to draw out the actual lived experiences of Soweto as a dynamic “syncretic urban formation”. As he mentions, “we have fewer academic or theoretical reflections on its place in the city, its rhythms and senses. That the township both is and is not urban, that it is proximate to the city while at its margins, and that city and township were inextricably linked under apartheid- all these points are incontestable” (Mbenbe 2004:499).

**Africa as a Symbol (refer to figures 19 and 20)**

It is this message/sign of the African continent, which is arguably found new life in the emergence of Y-Culture, especially when it comes to reading Y-Style in Y-Culture. This is evident when considering figure 19 and the text printed on it, *I Am an African*. In figure 20 the image of the continent is being used in a way that plays on the stereotype of Africa being associated with *Livestock* or cattle. Both garments and their use of the image of the African continent, communicate messages that dissolve the stereotypes associated with Africa, in the case of figure 19, and invert them in the case of the figure 20. The use of the continent as a sign in the construction of Y-style, together with the design of these garments, communicates a specific message about how post-apartheid youth assert their identities. This section will now focus on the importance of the continent as a symbol and the phrases that accompany it on these two garments and together what they tell us about Y-Style.

In reference to figure 19, the phrase, “I Am an African” is taken from Thabo Mbeki’s speech in 1996, as deputy president on the adoption of the Constitutional Bill. In the
Figure 19: I am an African (taken on 10/04/2005)

Detailed caption overleaf.
This dress has been put on a mannequin just outside the Y-Shoppe, where in the background one can see a rail of shelves with various issues of YMAG being sold. The dress itself is simple in its design with only seams on the side holding it together making it a t-shirt dress - structured on its top half with a thick seam around the v-neckline and sleeves and loose flowing at the bottom. What is interesting is the colour combinations of how this item has been styled on the mannequin. The colours blue and brown are natural colours perhaps implying the contrasts of sky and earth when read together with the print and image harks to romanticized notions evident in Thabo Mbeki’s speech of the same name “I am an African”, namely what makes me African is the blueness of the sky and brown of the earth. The emphasis on such bright colours in this garment is counteracted by the black image and print as well as that of the mannequin and the belt, so that superficially the image created of the wearer of such a garment would be black. The brown v-neck is drawing the viewer’s attention to the print and image.
speech Mr. Mbeki repeatedly states, “I am an African” in a way that pays respect to everyone who was born in Africa whether or not their ancestors were African, “I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their own actions, they remain still, part of me… In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East. Their proud dignity informs my bearing, their culture a part of my essence” (Mbeki 1996 in Umrobula- Nonracialism in Action, 2001). The important message in this speech is that him being an African is a result of the generations of various ethnicities, histories and racialized identities that went before him and that the new constitution dislodges old stereotypes of what it means to be African, “The constitution whose adoption we celebrate constitutes and unequivocal statement that we refuse to accept that our Africanness shall be defined by our race, colour, gender of historical origins” (Mbeki 1996 in Umrobula- Nonracialism in Action, 2001).

What Mr. Mbeki implies in this speech by proclaiming his Africanness and what this blue garment above illustrates is a meaning of what it means to be an African in post-apartheid South Africa, which ideally should be free of old nationalist stereotypes concerning the continent, whether they are of colonial origins or Black nationalist ones. Effectively this is exactly how the phrase could be interpreted in the context of Y-Culture and in the everyday lives and activities of the Y-Generation, so much so that one would not be wrong in thinking that Mr. Mbeki wrote the speech with the Y-Generation in mind. This is because the context of which this speech is inspired, namely that of post-apartheid, is such that stereotypes concerning various social groups were beginning to be challenged with the breakdown of official legislation based on related classifications. This is important, as the previous chapter indicated that Mr. Mbeki has been criticised for not taking an active interest in the growing youth cultural movement.

By employing this phrase on the front of this garment, itself a rather ‘classically styled garment put together with a fashionable belt, shows that not only is being an African considered ‘stylish’ but more so stating that fact and broadcasting it on your chest for everyone to see is, which relates to a conception of Y-Style being an assertion of pride. Part of this assertion means affirming some kind of resistance to previous ideas and
stereotypes attached to what it means to be African and the continent itself, as Nutall says, “what is clear is that new youth cultures are superseding the resistance politics of an earlier generation, while still jamming, remixing, and remaking cultural codes and signifiers from the past” (2004:436).

In regard to figure 20, the literal meaning of the word Livestock, is a message/sign suggesting its actual meaning in this context, namely, as opposed to referring to cattle livestock of many commercial farmers and rural Africans, it is stating that the wearer of this particular t-shirt is part of the ‘human’ livestock that habituates the continent. There are two important related points that emerge; firstly the message in this garment draws out the dichotomies between the stereotypical perceptions of the African continent and the more fluid heterogeneous ones; such as animals/humans, traditional/modern, nature/culture, collective belonging/individual identity. What is even more telling is that all of these opposites are symbolized by the single image of Africa and in the everyday lives of Africans they co-exist. This is especially so in those of the Y-Generation who, if this t-shirt is anything to go by, actively recognize the fluidity and syncretism between such dichotomized perceptions and stereotypes of Africans and Africa and remake an image of Africa which is more in line with what it means to be an African youth living in a post-apartheid climate.

The second important point, related to the above, is that the message in the signs of the word Livestock and the continent of Africa invert the stereotype of Africa being conceptualized as a place inhabited exclusively by animals. Even in his moving speech Mr. Mbeki feeds into these stereotypes by launching into a romanticized description of the natural wonders of the continent and whether or not he “should concede equal citizenship of our country to the leopard and the lion, the elephant and the springbok, the hyena, the black mamba and the pestilential mosquito” (Mbeki 1996). The human presence of Africa was denied for so many years, which inevitably was the ideological basis that set the progress of colonialism in motion. Mary-Louise Pratt writes about the prominence of natural history with its emphasis on the flora and fauna of the continent in the early travel writers accounts of Africa, “natural history provided means for narrating
Figure 20: Livestock (taken on 11/04/2005)

Detailed caption overleaf.
Figure 20: Livestock (taken on 11/04/2005)

This is a simple men’s t-shirt with the word “Livestock” printed on it. The letter ‘o’ is replaced by the continent of Africa with two horns coming out either side, which harks to an image of cattle livestock. The metaphor of cattle is used to refer to the wearer of this garment being part of the ‘human’ livestock that habituates the continent. The use of black and white letters of different shapes and sizes as well as being the wrong way around imply how varied this ‘livestock’ of people are. There are two important related points that emerge: firstly the message in this garment draws out the dichotomies between the stereotypical perceptions of the African continent and the more fluid heterogenous ones; such as animals/humans, traditional/modern, nature/culture, group belonging/individual identity. What is even more telling is that all of these opposites are symbolized by the single image of Africa, and that in the everyday lives of Africans they co-exist. This is especially so in those of the Y-Generation who, if this t-shirt is anything to go by, actively recognize the fluidity and syncretism between such dichotomized perceptions and stereotypes of Africans and Africa. They remake an image of Africa which is more in line with what it means to be an African youth living in a post-apartheid climate.

The second important point, related to the above, is that the message in the signs of the word Livestock and the continent of Africa invert the stereotype of Africa being conceptualized as a place inhabited exclusively by animals. This proclamation of the ‘real’ livestock of Africa stands in direct opposition to the stereotypical view of the continent only being associated with and respected for its wildlife, climate and natural resources. This is quite ironic because if one looks at the photograph it becomes clear that the t-shirt is hanging on a rail directly above a shelf of men’s animal-fur sandals (it is not clear whether they are real or fake fur but this does not really matter, the message is clear). This really exemplifies the notion of fragmentation and its potential for contradiction in this inversion of the stereotype of Africa and its association with wildlife (in the t-shirt) yet having a whole shelf of animal-hide shoes directly underneath it. The shoes themselves are also confections of various styles like those of smart Italian slippers with pointed and square tips as well as slip-slops. The common feature being animal fur which in a way makes them definable as ‘African styled’ shoes.
inland travel and exploration aimed not at the discovery of trade routes, but at territorial surveillance, appropriation of resources, and administrative control” (Pratt 1992:39). What this t-shirt is saying, by someone wearing it, is that they are the real ‘livestock’ of what characterizes the African continent not the exceptional wildlife.

This proclamation of the ‘real’ livestock of Africa stands in direct opposition to the stereotypical view of the continent only being associated with and respected for its wildlife, climate and natural resources. This is quite ironic because if one looks closely at the photograph it becomes clear that the t-shirt is hanging on a rail directly above a shelf of animal-fur sandals. This exemplifies the notion of fragmentation and the potential for contradiction in this inversion of the stereotype of Africa and its association with wildlife (in the t-shirt) yet having a whole shelf of animal-hide shoes directly underneath it.

Reading Y-Style

The true meaning of contradiction gets lost in the above understanding of fragmentation because the Y-Generation are not concerned with coherence but rather appropriating messages and signs from various sources in constructing their post-apartheid identities. Muggleton suggests that the appreciation of contradiction as something that is not authentic and therefore hypocritical is only possible in the postmodern era, as postmodernism indicates “that contradictions in cultural forms are to be expected and appreciated, not automatically and compulsively explained away” (Muggleton 2000:47).

The message one gets from what seems to be contradictory in Y-Culture has in fact been described as “aggressive, hungry, ambitious” (Appendix1.4:1) and having a “social edge” (Appendix1.1:1). This is appropriately shown in these photographs that the Y-Generation are not too perturbed whether their pastiche of fragments contradict each other, what matters is that they are in a process of “self-making” which Nuttall describes as “the emergence of new stylizations of the self”, which according to her “represents one of the most decisive shifts of the post-apartheid era” (2004:449).

I'm not sure whether it is real or fake fur but this doesn't really matter, the message is clear.
In introducing the discussion about Y-Style, a discussion of theory regarding fashion and style and how these two are located within the broader debate of the relationship between modernism and post-modernism was necessary. I have attempted to show that Y-Style, as understood in light of Muggleton’s notion of fragmentation, coheres with an understanding of postmodernism and its relationship with style as eclectic, that is, “the postmodern expansion of eclecticism: a greater variety of styles now travel at a faster rate than ever before, allowing consumers greater scope for their creative and aesthetic outlets” (Muggleton 2000:41).

Although Y-Style as communicated through these garments can be read as a combination of the actual design of the garments as well as the ‘tongue-in-cheek’ messages printed on them, it does not agree entirely with Muggleton’s understanding of postmodern subcultural style, who believes that when it comes to subcultural style, it (style) “is now worn for its look, not for any underlying message; or rather the look is now the message” (2000:44).

When it comes to Y-Style, although one can see this statement could be applicable, in that the messages and signs communicated in these garments show strong ties to the past, and are hence worn because this connection to our history is what is fashionable or ‘cool’ - it is also reversed i.e. the literal sign/message is what gives the garment its look. This is because in all four examples it is the sign/message that dictates Y-Style, which combines strong connections to the past and the political history of the country, with an assertion of pride in being the generation who have to a degree transcended many social boundaries and are proud of their history. This history is characterized by staunch adherence to such social boundaries, which makes this combination seem contradictory.

It is the stringent acknowledgement and incorporation of the past that sees the limits of much subcultural theory as applicable to Y-Culture, which therefore cannot be reduced to subcultural analysis, as Nuttall writes regarding the uniqueness of post-apartheid youth cultures, that “the world appears increasingly as a set of fragments, bits and pieces with
which young people grapple. Sutured onto these bits and pieces are the histories of isolation from and connection to the world that South Africans carry” (Nuttall 2004:441).

Either way a staunch acknowledgement of South African political history is being communicated whether those who wear it appreciate and understand it or whether they are wearing these garments just to be fashionable.
CHAPTER EIGHT:

CONCLUSION

This project has attempted to achieve to main aims, which taken together provide the answer to the main research question, in what ways does Y-Culture challenge Hebdige’s theory of subculture? The first aim is to explore the phenomenon of Y-Culture as being a relevant post-apartheid youth cultural formation and secondly how it transcends traditional subcultural theory as understood by Dick Hebdige. It is for this reason that I have attempted to show the limits of Hebdige’s theory of subculture, by focusing on three subjects through which he articulates his argument, resistance, subcultures as hybrid, and style. All of these, although relevant in some respects, are not fully consistent with Y-Culture.

Exploring Y-Culture in Response to Hebdige

Chapter four sets out to describe the history of YFM and the context of the station as it is today, which has important implications for Y-Culture. It is in this chapter that one begins to see how in its beginning days Y-Culture had congruencies to what Hebdige understands as subculture, fundamentally based on resisting the norms of the broader society in that nothing like it had ever occurred in South African popular culture before. However through its expansion and growth into what is best described as a commercial cultural formation, enhanced by a post-apartheid context, one questions what and whose norms it resists today, as well as whether resistance itself is a priority at all to the participants of Y-Culture.

Chapter five suggests that the notion of resistance is played out in more covert ways than it was understood by Hebdige. It is this fact that resonates with Nuttall’s comment that Y-Culture provides a means to resist “master narratives of who we are” (Nuttall 2004:442). Although she employs this comment in reference to the tongue-in-cheek language of YMAG, I have attempted to show, in this chapter, that fundamentally Y-Culture is about this kind of resistance as well as being proud of such. The youth who are participants in
Y-Culture are so because of this refusal to accept “master narratives of who we are” and do so with an exertion of pride. This gets clearly expressed on the show Harambe in the fast-paced witty exchanges between the DJ’s and their emergent discussions. In these the DJ’s move quickly and easily between issues pertaining to both socio-political discourses and debates as well those dealing with elements of popular culture, such as music, fashion and trends. The genres of music which were played during the week’s worth of recording, namely, kwaito and South African hip-hop, show through their relative emergence in the terrain of South African popular culture, how the Y-Generation are able to resist master narratives and cultivate their youth identities. These youth identities in their uniqueness are also affiliated to global popular culture, which is implied in the form of South African hip-hop.

All of the above creates intersections and conflations between the global and the local, what Neate calls the “glocal” (2003:85), the past and present, which are beyond understandings of hybridity. It is for this reason when looking at chapter six dealing with YMAG, I have attempted to drop the use of this term in reference to Y-Culture and opted instead for one that emphasizes the “permeable boundaries” of post-apartheid youth identities, namely syncretism (Becquer & Gatti 1981:447). This notion of syncretism, according to Becquer and Gatti, allows for movement between identities imagined to be fixed and hence enables contradiction to flourish (1981:447). Emphasis on contradiction is key when considering YMAG because of the various elements it draws on in its portrayal of the areas of interest that South African youth are currently concerned with. Perhaps the word contradiction is not correct due to its negative hypocritical implications, because when it comes to YMAG and Y-Culture the meaning of contradiction should not be considered in such a negative light. Rather it should be thought of as allowing various fragments to be pulled together regardless of how opposite they are, to create something that is not permanent but temporarily stable until something new comes along or a new combination of various elements is put together.

The same can be said for a reading of Y-Style, in chapter seven, through the clothes sold at the Y-Shoppe, namely that these clothes indicate that the participants of Y-Culture
draw on many influences and fashions in the construction of their style, which has
staunch affiliations to our politically charged history yet follow the global trends of
fashion. The message that gets communicated is that Y-Style is about the meaning of
signs, which are overt. These signs and messages is what defines Y-Style due to its strong
ties to the history of this country. Whether those who employ this style do so because of
the appreciation of the socio-political content of the garments or because the garments are
considered fashionable doesn’t matter. What is important is that it is this social and
political awareness that is the hallmark of Y-Style and what makes those who wear it part
of a unique youth cultural formation.

Researching Y-Culture

In terms of the second aim of this project, showing the limits of Hebdige’s theory of
subculture, Clarke and Muggleton have in fact indicated these limits in their respective
works. Both of them express that traditional theories on subculture have failed because
they treat subcultures as “static and rigid anthropological entities” (Clarke 1981:176) and
that research of subcultures would be more credible if pursued by those who understand
the cultural formation and who are “already immersed in their chosen culture prior to
intellectual engagement” (Muggleton 2000:4).

Regarding the second point made by Muggleton as a reflexive exercise, I am a participant
of Y-Culture, although defining this role has not been the point of this project, and
perhaps this would make for intriguing research. Y-Culture is an area and affiliation of
South African popular culture that I feel best suits how I interact and occupy the world
as a post-apartheid youth. There is a limit however at which many would question how
far this affiliation I have with Y-Culture can go and indeed I have myself, it is this same
limit that does not allow me to fully embrace Y-Culture and its embracing of me, and that
boundary is my whiteness.

Although being white makes me question if Y-Culture is targeted directly at me, I do feel
that being young and of the Generation Y enables me to engage with my whiteness in
interesting ways. These primarily include resisting traditional master narraties of such a
position understood as “the discourse that established the broad contours of white identity, and formed the hegemonic core discourse for subsequent and divergent articulations of whiteness” (Steyn 2001:xxxix). It is one of the reasons Y-Culture and YFM appeals to me, a post-apartheid white youth. It allows me to question a master narrative of whiteness, by being immersed in an urban youth culture that allows new points of identity affiliation to emerge such as those based on fashion, music and popular culture. The important point about Y-Culture is that although very much anchored in South Africa and exerts a pride of all things South African, which includes a strong connection to the past, it also allows its participants to access a global popular culture.

In conclusion then it is necessary to emphasize in line with the argument of this project that Y-Culture is a formation that is syncretic and has permeable boundaries that are being reformed and demarcated in a continuous development. Consequently this project is a ‘snapshot’ of this process from my experience of participating in Y-Culture as a post-apartheid white youth of the Y-Generation.
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REFERENCES

Primary Material

Harambe, 5pm-9pm, Monday 25 September, \textit{YFM-99.2}, available on DSTV Audio Bouquet channel 60, or on the website www.yfm.co.za or 99.2 FM (if in the Gauteng region).

Harambe, 5pm-9pm, Tuesday 26 September, \textit{YFM-99.2}, available on DSTV Audio Bouquet channel 60, or on the website www.yfm.co.za or 99.2 FM (if in the Gauteng region).

Harambe, 5pm-9pm, Wednesday 27 September, \textit{YFM-99.2}, available on DSTV Audio Bouquet channel 60, or on the website www.yfm.co.za or 99.2 FM (if in the Gauteng region).

Harambe, 5pm-9pm, Thursday 28 September, \textit{YFM-99.2}, available on DSTV Audio Bouquet channel 60, or on the website www.yfm.co.za or 99.2 FM (if in the Gauteng region).

Harambe, 5pm-9pm, Friday 29 September, \textit{YFM-99.2}, available on DSTV Audio Bouquet channel 60, or on the website www.yfm.co.za or 99.2 FM (if in the Gauteng region).

YMAG, April/May 2003, Vol.5, Issue 44.
YMAG, April/May, 2004, Vol.6, Issue 50.
YMAG, April/May, 2005, Vol.6, Issue 56.

The Zone in Rosebank was visited each day for approximately two hours a day during the period 09/04/2005- 23/04/2005. The images referred to as Figures 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20, were taken at the Y-Shoppe during this period, specifically on the dates 10/04/2005 and 11/04/2005.


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Appendix 1.1: Interview with Sarah Nuttall

18 April 2005

G: YMAG is just one element of YCulture.

SN: I agree.

G: I was chatting with my friend Sanza who said and which I’ve found myself is that there is a huge gap between the stuff being said on the radio and the stuff in the Mag.

SN: Ya, the radio is more interesting.

G: The line that I’m going with (in theorizing this project) is Dick Hebdige’s stuff on subculture. Because when I read that book I found there was so much stuff that was Yculture in it but there was also so much that completely wasn’t. So I’m wanting to find out how and in what ways Y-Culture fits into the notion of subculture and how it doesn’t.

SN: Ya, I can comment on that a little bit. I agree with u, I think there are subcultural elements, but I think it is not fundamentally a subculture, its much more of a mainstream culture. I think subculture is a slightly outdated term in the context of globalization and consumerism, because I think that really interesting things can happen- I kinda said that towards the end of my article- that they can suddenly cohere into political moments of critique. But I think its not an adequate discursive frame for understanding it, so I think you are really right. So if u could come out with a critique of Hebdige, cos he is writing 40 years ago. I think the critique comes from the way consumer culture works, is by definition not going to be subcultural its going to be mainstream. But that doesn’t mean to say that it doesn’t have a social edge to it. What’s interesting about Joburg and South Africa in general, unlike the US, consumer culture still has that edge to it, it has a slightly political edge because it is experimenting with race and racial identities- I think, do you agree?
G: I agree to the point of, well I find, I kind of have a problem with the academic way of thinking about racial identity, its very much, its beautiful, its transforming, its moved beyond simple categories of black, white etc, but just speaking with people, and my friend, its very real (these categories). Even driving here and listening to the radio and Thomas (DJ) turns around and says ‘did you see how many blacks were playing in the baby Bok side on the weekend?’ There seems to be a big gap between a lot of the theory (around race) like Dolby’s stuff that racial identity is about style, but at the end of the day it isn’t, most people on the ground don’t know what you are talking about when you try and communicate this theory.

SN: Ya, but I think, people themselves adopt certain master narratives about who they are, which is not always reflective in their practice. That’s why an anthropological approach doesn’t just take people at face value because they’ve received very powerful discourses from South Africa itself about who they are and where they are going. I think the important thing to look at their everyday lives, that they negotiate race in a very complex way. And I think those Hansa ads are interesting. And I think the interesting point for you could be to look at the unevenness in the way in which race plays itself out, and not to always take at face value what people say. I think that if you look at blackness, there is no question that there is a way in which middle-class blackness in the city is associated with glamour, and I think that’s really different from the past. And i think that one does need to tease out the stylistic elements of race. I think that Dolby was right, I don’t think she was saying race doesn’t exist, she was saying that its interesting how the language of race is been channelled through issues of fashion and style and music. And I find with people here on campus, often what is keeping them separate is in fact that they listen to different music not that they feel alienated in a racial sense. So I think that’s an important point. But of course there is racial anger and racial resentment and there’s racial confusion and I think all of that is what makes Y-Culture interesting because all of that is coming out at the same time. But I think there is more to the issue of style it’s become very important in the making of race and you have to work with that, even if
people themselves are not articulating it to you in exactly that way you can read it off their bodies what they thinking about who they are.

G: And also people’s response to you.

SN: So, I think you have to theorize what it is you are saying to me and be confident about that. Look, I think there is a very strong race message coming from government more than there was a few years ago around blackness in particular, I don’t know what your view is but I think its quite a destructive message and an anachronistic message. And I think young people are living in race in a much more complex, beguiling, compelling capacious way. And I think for those of us who study Y-Culture, I think that is an important thing to draw out. Are u going to be doing interviews?

G: Yes, they’re gonna hook up interviews for me at Y.

SN: There is a book that is about to come out written by my friend, which will be very useful to you. It’s a biography of Khabzela, she actually traces the history of Y. She’s done more interviews and stuff than anyone so far and its by someone called Liz McGregor and its coming out in October, she’s just finished the manuscript and you really need to work your way through that. Its very good, very well researched and not very academic, she’s a journalist. She’s not really theorizing around race and stuff, she’s telling the story of a movement a social movement in a way. So you need to follow that up.

G: Do u think that would be a good way to refer to YCulture, as a social movement as opposed to ‘sort of subculture’?

SN: Not really, I think that what one can say about it is that it is a post-resistance genre, whatever it is. It’s sort of not working in the resistance realm, it’s the emergence of a new cultural voice in this country, which is not about resistance but rather other sorts of configurations. And its about saying ‘what makes me African is that I take bits and pieces
from all over the world, but I take things and I make up a kind of stylistics of my own’ - I think that was very different from the message one was getting in the resistance movement, not what it is to be African. But it is different from government, the Mbeki government has moved more and more into a race politics that is assuming certain things about blackness and what whiteness. So what I’m saying to you is that maybe it will become a social movement because its young, it is a different generation and I think the government is being anachronistic about race. The other thing to think about is class, its not just a middle-class phenomenon but it sometimes is, it’s a very clever intervention in consumer culture and that comes out in the interviews that she (Liz McGregor) has done. But its also about DJ’s phoning up prisoners, its talking about race, its talking about rape, its talking about AIDS. So what I love about it and probably what you do too is the malleability of it and the fact that its this multimedia thing that just keeps reforming and shaping itself, and that is very much a technological way of being in the world- a constant morphing into something else. I like that because I think people outside of Africa theorize Africans in very static ways and it’s (Y-Culture) positioning them as the African modern. And I think it’s about a certain kind of cosmopolitan, metropolitan identity. Its about the city, the idea of the city and what I say in my piece is that its about the township moving into the centre of the city, and I think all of those things are completely different from before. So I think u need to test those arguments and contest them a lot. I think the gender stuff is very unsettling and unstable and I think you could prod that quite a lot. The letter pages in YMAG are very interesting in that way cos you get more and more women saying that they gonna act like men in a way, very macho! I would love to see some interesting stuff on that.
Appendix 1.2: Interview with
Dineo Mahloele-Public Relations Officer of Y
21 April 2005

GF: Looking at the phenomenon that is Y-Culture that it is really more than just a radio station. Going along the lines of Dick Hebdige’s work on subculture which although has its place is now becoming dated. My main research question is ‘in what ways does Y-Culture cohere with Hebdige’s understanding of subculture and what ways does it deviate, and Y? Could Y-Culture be used as a critique of Hebdige’s theory? Can u give me your name and your job description.

DM: Dineo Mahloele (spels it for me) and I’m in charge of public relations and Y-Cares. Y-Cares is YFM’s social responsibility arm; it deals with education, entrepreneurship, HIV/Aids and abuse against women and children.

GF: What in your opinion is Y-Culture?
DM: Y-Culture is a lifestyle. Its something that started when YFM started, but I think when Y started it was we gonna be a kind of revolution thing, they thought, ok fine, we’re gonna cater for the market that everyone leaves out, you know what I’m saying. The youth market didn’t have a radio station that was dedicated to them, so we sort of made that little community and said ‘ok, Y-Culture is young people who are out there who have a bright future, who want to be something in the future, people who are fun and who are young at heart’, you know. In the beginning it started out with those young people that mainly would like kwaito and house music and we came on saying to people we are going to play something that they don’t play on air and at that stage when you growing-up a young person is almost rebellious, and we became that, we’ve been associated with a culture that is rebellious and on the move and ‘out-there, in-your-face’ kind of thing, so that’s the kind of people we think we are and we’ve brought that along up until now. So that’s what I would say is actually the culture.
GF: In line with what u were saying, what is your understanding of subculture and how would Y be associated with that, because as you were saying you believe it started out as a rebellious thing, do you think that's still applicable?

DM: No not really because at that time you needed to market yourself, as Mzezs (Mzekezeke) would say 'ambush marketing' when you’re in everybody’s face and force them to eat what you are eating kinda thing, and observe. Its one of those things that you don’t have to stay there but you grow because the people that you started off with have grown up, but yes we were those people that wanted to be ahead but we are ahead now.

So those who are still coming-up, look-up to those people who started it. And yes we can still instill cultures in people in a way that’s more aligned with the ones we grew up with, that YFM grew up with and are now at a level of ‘I think I’ve made my point somewhere, I think I’ve achieved a couple of things in life and it’s because of the way that I’ve gone about it’ and now I can be like something and try and see ‘how do I reach everybody that likes YFM that grew up with YFM, but didn’t know how Y started but still get them to listen. So its different kinda things that you now get into that, well if I still define that ‘Y person’ but in a different way, it’s also like almost reinventing yourself. Saying how do you become a new Y with the old Y kinda thing. To make sure you don’t lose those you grew-up with and you wanna get more people.

GF: What would you define the style of Y-Culture as, cos style is such a loaded term, is it fashion, music. What’s your idea of Y-Style?

DM: In three simple words- Y-Style is 'young at heart'. Because that what people who work here, they also represent the market that we deal with. Young at heart, I mean we've got like all the people but because of their space and what they like to do and what they enjoy. A 49-year-old here, you don’t feel like it was a 40-year-old kinda thing. You’ll respect them yes, but you understand each other because you’re on the same level.

GF: Would u say the term ‘youth’ then is outdated when you refer to Y-Culture, because youth is such a loaded term in this country, it is an very political category, is it a lucrative term to refer to Y-Culture?
DM: I would say that yes it started of as a youth radio station, I mean that’s what it’s called because most of us consider ourselves young. One thing that Greg likes to say is that we don’t like to box people, ok fine if you are a white person that listens to us we’ll talk to you, but its all about what your state is at that time, if u feel u are still young, if older people as well, if I go to with my age group I mean I’m young, my brothers age-group they consider me as like a baby kinda thing, so I think it differs with the different kinda people you are with at that time. But I might feel a bit older when I’m with people, but with my friends, or something like that I’m young, with other people I’m a baby, it differs, it’s a totally different thing, so it doesn’t actually box you. I mean you do target as a marketer say you have a 16-24-35, you know you like to work it like that because it makes it easier for a person to actually do this with this market, but when you say are talking to a young person… (couldn’t hear what she was saying).

GF: The notion of rebellion and resistance, you said that Y started out as something like that, where do you think that is today, cos I know there are a lot of people that probably do feel antagonistic to Y, because they probably feel it doesn’t include them. What is your view about that resistance?

DM: One thing is that we with ourselves we don’t conform to what everybody else does. We try and keep it to what we think is right, what we think at that moment is appropriate, I mean, one thing is that the way our DJ’s execute their messages. Fresh has got this thing, you know ‘its just kcufting mad’, you know what it means? You know what I’m saying, as in ‘Fucking mad’. But because of the way we are used to talking and because of the way our listeners know that we talk like that it doesn’t feel like you are being kind of, if somebody else, like if Metro said that, ooh God I’ve got 50-year olds listening to this, but with our market even 50-year-olds come and talk like that cos they identify with the way we’ve grown-up, the way that we’ve developed, with the way that we talk and they understand that. With anybody else, like other radio stations wouldn’t say ‘ass’ but we do because we wanna push boundaries, how far we can get with stuff. And we have been able to get away with a lot, I mean the fact that Fresh goes ‘kcuft this’, you know what he means, but its acceptable because its said in a way that people understand, and people know that on YFM people push boundaries, and its one of those things when you
talk with other people they wouldn’t be able to touch. That kind of rebellious thing is still there but it’s not on a level that it was when we started off, its on a different level in a way that distinguishes us from other people. So we’re not the same as everybody else.

GF: In your opinion why do you think Y-Culture emerged in Johannesburg and in the Zone?
DM: I think Johannesburg because its got that buzz, you know Johannesburg has got that thing, that rebellion kinda thing, I mean Soweto is not so far off. I think they knew that when they (initiators of YFM) came to Joburg the young people around here were very outspoken unlike all the other provinces, I think that’s maybe what they saw, and also resources as well, cos its very big where u can get funding. I think also in terms of being the economic hub of South Africa as well, if you had to reach agencies and companies and stuff like that, this is where it would have to happen, you know what I’m saying. The money is here, the funding would be here, maybe it would much easier to reach the kind of calibre of DJ’s that u wanted, here as well, I’m not saying that is why but in my opinion.

GF: Your idea of your target market, your idea! audience, for example you said 16-24 etc.? 
DM: You know when you go and apply you say you wanna speak to these people, but ideally its everybody and anybody who feels Y. If you feel Y. Its not necessarily that we want only black people or 50/50. Anybody who feels Y, who feels the culture, who feels the love, who feels the music, who feels the lifestyle, who feels YMAG, in terms of like all the different elements we have around here and you fuse it together and you think ‘I identify with this thing’- that’s for you. But of course the ideal is the 16-35 year-old, urban, black people.

GF: You touched on something that I wanted to discuss as well, the racial identity issue, what is your feeling towards that, and what do think the relationship between YCulture and race is right now, because what I can see is that its still touchy and is a very grey area?
DM: It is still there, our listeners are still predominantly black, but I sometimes think we have more white, Coloured and Indian listeners than what our stats say. You know according to the RAMS and stuff like that you think to yourself, is that it. You know the last time we checked we were in there with 14000 listeners (white). I mean I'm serious. Right now I think that racial thing is moving on, sometimes I think people don't wanna say that they listen to Y when they actually do. We can actually see it right now that it's not actually about what radio station you listen to but rather what kind of music you gonna here on a radio station. What you wanna hear when you wanna hear it, and people have so many choices nowadays like even if you don't listen to radio there are so many other things you can do. The racial thing, yes its still there we're still predominantly black, stuff like that but there are more people who know about us now, than before, and it doesn't matter who we speak to we speak to everybody irrespective of your colour.

GF: The relationship between YMAG and YFM, from my point of view there is definitely a gap between the two. What do you think that gap is and how do think it can be reconciled?

DM: The thing is YFM speaks to a mass kind of people and YMAG I think has got its own niche of the kind of people as well, even though you do get people who can crossover but because of the fact that in YMAG will carry stuff that's more deep and more intuitive and stuff like that but then unfortunately because of the mediums they are too different, so you can't actually say you wanna merge the two. Yes they come from the same thing but they are extensions of, you know we've got this culture of people who like to read, who like to do this and that and we've got listeners who like a lot of other things as well. And we have in terms of fashion, we have the Y fashion show as well, and the Y-Shoppe and its like trying to fuse… (could not hear what she said) at the end of the day they're all giving a culture that is Y-Culture, they support each other and that YMAG is an extension of YFM but because it goes out to other regions as well. Unfortunately other people can't hear what YFM is so you have to put it on a deeper level because the YFM level is more commercial music its like 'now' and on YMAG you need to say something like 'this is who we are, this is where we're going' and its more of like
documenting things that happen in our lives, which is how YFM started, and its like a
deeper level of YFM than just a radio product.
Appendix 1.3: Interview with Lindy Zokuva-
The Brand Custodian of Y
22 April 2005

GF: Give me your name and job description please.
LZ: OK, my name is Lindy Zokuva and I’m the brand manager for YFM, and what that
means is that I’m actually the brand custodian, obviously working hand in hand with
Dineo, she’s more on the perception side and I’m more on the look and feel of the brand
and everything, just to make sure there is consistency in terms of the communication that
goes out to both trade and consumers.

GF: Interesting, ok cool, I just want to tell you a bit about the background theory to
where I’m at in terms of conceptualizing this project, cos it might help you with
(understanding) the questions. I’m looking at the Y-Phenomenon from a subcultural
analytical perspective, specifically of that of Dick Hebdige. Y doesn’t fit neatly into
Hebdige’s description, Y isn’t really resisting anyone.

LZ: It was more of when the shareholders sat down and actually looked at things they
saw that wasn’t any radio station that was particularly locking at the youth. That’s where
the whole movement started.

GF: What in your opinion is Y-Culture?
LZ: Y-Culture is actually divided in different spheres because I would say its
entertainment, music and also art as well. Because it’s not just playing music on radio,
lets just say, or, also maybe doing the poetry sessions or whatever, it’s also about
empowering those people that are involved in that space. From maybe just playing, lets
say for example, playing songs on air that come from an artist that is not known, and
make that person a bigger person than what they’ve worked for. So it’s sort of like, it
gives people a platform in various spaces. I would say whether it being musically, also
YMAG comes into play here where we give young stylists a platform for their products
their creations to be seen out there, and we also work with the young photographers. It’s not just musically its various things.

GF: In what ways could Y-Culture be considered a subculture?
LZ: What does that mean actually?
GF: in your understanding of subculture, how would you see Y fitting into that? Do you consider it a subculture?
LZ: I would say it’s got its own culture. I wouldn’t say it’s a subculture but its sort of like as I said it was meant to be for people that weren’t catered for. And I mean it evolves all the time, its not just about youth now anymore, its about the people that were youth when it launched then but now they’ve grown to be young professionals and whatever. It’s evolved over the years and people have actually grown with it and also in terms of our programming as well, we try make sure that we cater for all these people- the youth that is still growing and also the people that have grown beyond being called ‘the youth’. The line that we normally say, that we like to use at Y is that ‘youth is just a state of mind’, it’s how young u feel, it’s not the age that matters.

GF: In what ways does Y-Culture have a specific style, in terms of dress in terms of music?
LZ: i think its more of a personal thing actually, within this target market that Y has, it’s more about people understanding who they are and not necessarily following certain type of fashion or certain type of thinking or whatever, you are just allowed to be who u are, your own individual, and that’s what Y actually pushes. You know, if you feel comfortable in having dreadlocks, and wearing like African stuff, it’s acceptable because it’s who you are, you know, people must just accept you for who you are basically. It’s not just about dressing in a certain way or doing things in a certain way, it’s just about individuals.

GF: Do you believe Y-Culture stands in resistance to anything and if so what?
LZ: I wouldn’t say resistance but it’s just pushing the movement that it’s pushing amongst the youth. Because we’ve been known to be trendsetters and maybe certain
people don’t necessarily approve of ways that we do things because they’re more on the conservative side. But actually we thrive on stepping on untapped ground type thing, but obviously not doing it distastefully but obviously something that we feel that the youth would actually appreciate.

GF: In your opinion why do you think this whole phenomenon of Y emerged in Johannesburg?
LZ: Because that’s where trends start, whether we like it or not that’s where trends start and they sort of filter down to all the other provinces. I mean from like overseas it comes to JHB that’s the place it comes. Then obviously, I know, well I’m from the Eastern Cape, when I was still staying there, like ‘no I’d like to go to Joburg one day’ because obviously from a very tender age you are actually made to believe that’s where it’s happening, that’s where the gold is. So I mean unfortunately that’s how it is, that’s where most corporations are, that’s where you make the most money, even though CT and Durban are also big cities but Joburg is still the one where you feel that you’d actually, cos you can have the same type of job in CT but it’s not gonna pay you the same. So that’s why people feel that ‘you know what that’s why we want to migrate to Joburg to like make something of ourselves’, not that you wont in other cities but it just it goes with the money as well. You know and also this is where everything begins, like kwaito music, this is where it began even though it might get now groups that actually emerged from Durban or Cape Town or wherever it may be, but it all started in Joburg. It being club DJ’s or whatever, it all starts in Joburg cos that’s where you get most clubs, that’s where you get, in terms of nightlife it’s buzzing.

GF: Why the Zone of all places?
LZ: Because that’s where trendy people are and we, as I said earlier, we are trendsetters and we associate ourselves with people that are trendy, that are happening that are hip. It’s a space where you’d actually find all these type of people that YFM represents hence us actually choosing this spot.

GF: Who is Y’s ideal target audience?
LZ: You know as I said earlier when it started it was a youth station, it was those people that were young then. But I mean we still want to actually keep those listeners within the station, we don’t want to just ignore them now because they’ve grown older or whatever. So like some of our DJ’s as well, they were younger at a certain point but now they’ve actually grown as well, they’ve got businesses, they’re now married and got kids and whatever. So those I mean people can still relate to our on-air personalities. And we still have the masses, basically, and when we do things we are always conscious of both markets. We don’t actually try and forget about the other market because it is a mass market.

GF: Who is the other market?

LZ: Meaning the masses, because you get the elite and you get which we call the 25ers, those are your young elite professionals. And you get the people who are still maybe at school or whatever the people trying to aspire to be the elite- the 29ers. Everyone else whether they stay in a shack are hawkers on the side of the road or whatever, but we try and make it, this is how we do it now in terms of programming, that we try and appeal to all these different markets. It’s not just about the people that have made it, cos that means that now you are preferring those people and you are leaving other people behind. Those people consume radio as well its not just about young professionals and they are actually the most people that listen to radio because the young professionals they go to work and have meetings the whole day whatever, the only time that they can actually catch the radio is when they going to work or they dropping the kids at school, or whatever, and also driving back home in the traffic or whatever. They don’t actually want to hear talking up a storm so they switch on their CD or whatever, so these guys (non-elite) listen to the radio whether its rural, or maybe just in the township, not necessarily rural, its not just about LMS (living measurement standard).

GF: That must be difficult to try and accommodate everyone because it’s like two worlds?

LZ: It is two different worlds but you know what, there is a space where both of these people actually meet, which is music, which is one of our USP’s (unit selling proportions), you see what I’m saying, that’s one of the things we use to sell YFM.
GF: Do you believe Y is exclusive and does it exclude?
LZ: You know what, what I know is that you can’t be everything to everyone, you see, but when we do things we try not to divert from what Y is about. At the end of the day because I mean it just depends what that is to different people. If they feel that its not catering for them, yes, you will get people that actually go and listen to Kaya FM because they feel it’s a more mature station or whatever. But I feel that, and funny enough Y is mostly steered towards males, and males wanna stay young forever. You see what I’m saying, so just to feel that they’re young or whatever whatever or that they’ve still got it, they actually would occasionally tune into Y just to listen to what’s going on and what’s happening and you know those type of things. But I mean you can’t be everything to everyone as long as us at YFM or YIRED as a business we stick to the brand core values and try and do what we do best. You know and obviously it will actually speak to the people that it speaks to.

GF: How do you feel about the gender thing?
LZ: You know what it’s very funny cos its actually transpired on the magazine as well, even though you’ll get a lot of fashion and whatever the stories will appeal to both, and also some of the features that we have both on radio and in the magazine actually speak to males even more. You know cos I would say here in SA there is not a lot of, lets say lets take the hip-hop genre, there is not a lot of hip-hop emcees- women emcees- so even b-boys. Like b-boys, break-dancing is more of a male thing and we cover those things in the magazine. From hip-hop rappers, even though we take quite a long time to actually catch-up like Europe did with America. So it’s taken us a long time as well actually, for the females to actually to get into the hip-hop space, even though they do appreciate hip-hop, but in terms of people that are actually rapping and whatever its gonna take a while. Its more boys so that’s why its more male astute. (Discussion about an advert for a club, “Friday night is mini-skirt night, those with the meanest mini-skirt gets in for free, Sat night is cleavage night, those with the best cleavage gets in for free”). That’s the thing, whether we like it or not those are the things that boys actually like, you know, and you do get women who do entertain those likes, you see.
GF: The relationship between YFM and Y MAG, there seems to be a gap.

LZ: YMAG’s strategy and formula has always been out-sourcing contributors. People that are experts in those various fields, that is why you end up getting a product that is like this. Because the thing is now, you will get someone that’s a writer or lets say 2 writers for YMAG that don’t necessarily understand the hip-hop genre, they won’t give it, it doesn’t come with a passion, so it’s different if you actually commission a story to someone whose got that passion as well because they put their all into that piece, cos they want the people that follow the movement to actually feel it you know. Whilst you reading it you are actually feeling what was going through their mind when they were writing it, type thing. So that has always been the formula, even though its got hiccups here and there with people not sticking to deadlines and you end up having to follow up on people just to make sure things happen but I mean its actually worked for YMAG. We actually get swamped with emails from people wanting to do stuff for us but also just applauding the way we doing the magazine. Because people feel they can’t wait for that issue of YMAG because the content that’s in there it’s like on point.

GF: Personally, going a little off track, but it just shows how passionate I am about it.

LZ: I know and I like seeing people like you! You can hear!

GF: ...Ya, I really enjoy the articles but in terms of the imagery, the gender thing comes up. I feel it’s the only magazine that speaks to me being young in terms of decent stuff to read.

LZ: Also with what you are studying as well cos it follows different types of cultures as well, you know, you get a lot of people that are just like you, that are about the culture not just seeing the glasses and shallow.

GF: You by Elle for that kind of thing.

LZ: Exactly, exactly!

GF: What is your opinion is Y-Culture’s relationship with the issue of race and racial identity, because so far it hasn’t come up at all but I think it’s an issue?

LZ: In terms of the station actually steered towards blacks?
GF: I think more in terms of the whole culture, because a lot of kids I think feel excluded from it because it is exclusionary…
LZ: From the culture or from the radio station?
GF: From the whole phenomenon.
LZ: But actually you’d be very surprised cos Lee’s actually been hosting a number of hip-hop events during the weekends. But the kids that actually come through, its very diverse, its like from Asian to white to black to Coloured to you name it, you know. I think from people that are my age it was still starting, that’s when the whole democratic thing was starting to happen, or whatever.
GF: How old were u when that happened?
LZ: Oh God well I’m now 28, so 1994, I was in matric or whatever. I mean things have actually really changed, you know, and obviously when we sit and strategize as well, we always saying that, we call them the emerging market, so we need to cater for that emerging market.
GF: Who are what?
LZ: Which is like 12-16, 12-15, you know, very integrated (racially), that’s some of the things that we want to come out more in terms of the programming or come through the programming or like on air. Those are things we need to also look into or whatever so I would say its actually changing definitely. And even the people our age I mean, like you were in the Model C schools so you know the people that started the culture actually have sort of got an understanding of doing things together and whatever whatever. But I mean I think these kids now that are coming up, they actually they see past the colour, you know, type of thing. And you know funny enough because I feel, a lot of the emerging market, these kids that are growing up, the black ones you find that now they are very much interested in 5FM because of Linkin Park and Live and all those types. And then you get the white ones who are into Y.
GF: But that’s been a phenomenon that’s been happening for a long time.
LZ: You see now, because I think it goes back to that whole aspiration thing as well, because black kids have always wanted to be like the white kids so now they shift to 5FM and also the white kids want to sort of actually taste what its like to be a black person type thing.
GF: Do you think it's that or do you think kids nowadays are willing to, and that it's not taboo to, play with those boundaries?
LZ: Yes! They pushing the boundaries.
GF: As opposed to wanting to be 'like whites'?
LZ: No, no no not necessarily being like, but obviously like understanding where they're coming from type thing.
GF: It's like a fascination with the other.
LZ: Exactly, what you're not type thing cos you're always interested to find out what they're doing and what they're about type thing. And I mean it also helps with your relationships as well cos once you actually know what type of person they are you know how to handle a person better as well. You know its like 'I've got this black friend from school and I've got this white friend from school', so we're trying to get into their space and the understanding like the background like how they grew up and whatever type thing.
GF: So that's it!
LZ: Aah is that it! I hope you're happy with my answers.
GF: Absolutely!
Appendix 1.4: Interview with
Greg Maloka- the General Manager of Y

22 April 2005

GM: My name is Greg Maloka and I’m the general manager of Yired group of companies, which owns YFM, YMAG, Y-shoppe, Y-World and pretty much anything else that has a Y infront of it.

GF: What is Y-Culture in your opinion, how would you describe it?

GM: It’s a lifestyle, it’s a movement, it’s basically a life that’s always been there and always existed, but never really sort of discovered, and very largely misunderstood, because they knew kind of very little about it. Its very progressive, its very aggressive in some terms, its hungry, it is very ambitious, its very successful, its hard-working. It’s basically a young culture you find in any city around the world.

GF: Would you consider it a subculture, according to what your understanding of subculture is?

GM: Yes and no, I think from a global perspective it is a subculture, you know, if you look at the global youth culture globally, I think you know every kind of city or place around the world will be considered a subculture as such. But then it’s a mainstream environment. Our youth culture I suppose is even more interesting and extra special in that it is made up of a lot of components. We come from quite an interesting past that not many countries have gone through, even though in the US you’ve had your years of segregation and racial tension etc. It is very similar to many other parts of the world whether it’s Catholics and Protestants, Jews and Arabs or whatever, in South Africa I think its quite interesting and different in the sense that not only do you have black people but you have eleven kinds of black people, you know, even more than eleven kinds of black people- that in itself, what does it mean, what does blackness mean amongst different kind of people and what does it mean amongst other races? The significance of that and what that integration means, you know, there are issues of tolerance, there of issues of, you know learning to kind of live together. Advertisers incidentally talk about sort of your young black people as the emerging market and we’ve
always argued that young black people are not an emerging market, you know. I like to think I’m young you know 30/31 and I like to think of myself as having emerged a long time ago cos I’ve always been exposed, you know. To me an emerging market is little nine year-olds who are going to school together, who you know integrate at that level and at that age from all kinds of backgrounds whether you know it’s racial, cultural or whatever the scenario is. Especially racial, they learn to see beyond colour, they learn to share very special and intimate experiences in life, like, you know, your first kiss, or your first fail, or having to deal with a parent issue, or whatever, you know whatever young people go through. As opposed to an environment where I’m at now I mean I’ve kind of had to or sort of kind of have to accept the fact that I’m in this environment and this is how I should behave, you know. I’ve had to as an adult adapt and change, you know. So you find SA has many pockets of people which I think makes it very interesting, I mean you know you still have your far left your far right, your extreme white, your extreme black and then you’ve got the small kind of integrating group in the middle, which in my opinion is actually the most important group in that it will remain small but it will be the most influential group ever. Because it will be the most exposed group, it will be a group that chooses to live in, you know, an open society as opposed to people who prefer to stay in their little pockets and so forth. And that also influences the culture that is the movement. If you look at it from a global perspective, you know, young people have always been the catalyst to many revolutions. You know, whether it is a political revolution or an economic revolution or you know just rebelling, you know the sixties were quite interesting, the whole flower society, these kind of things ‘we wanna have sex and listen to rock and roll’. Its always been there it’s a generation thing you know, to a large extent its not about black and white I think in this country and in many other countries we choose to make it that, you know, we kind of simplify it to races and it’s not really just about races, it’s also just about the struggle of young people generally. You know cos young people generally go through very similar experiences and challenges in life. It’s quite universal. The choice to take drugs for example isn’t just a choice for you know only rich kids or only poor kids, the matter is that it’s a choice between people that can access it, you know. Music styles, you know radio is for free, I mean you don’t pay anything to listen to music, you get exposure from that perspective. Alcohol, choice of
relationships, you know, there's a lot of things about young people generally that I think are very different in South Africa, and the Y-Culture is really about, not recreating a whole movement, you know, we're not reinventing any rules, we're just highlighting all the things that people don't see. We're encouraging, you know, all of the other slow moving sides of the social side of young people, where a lot of people are still very in many ways conservative in our country are still very black and very white to a large extreme. I mean what's interesting is, I look at the township people that complain about Y. By the way, listen, I'll always always in most instances will receive complaints from white people on racial issues that have been played on the station, and you know what sometimes the DJ's have pushed the envelope too much but its our mission to say we have to break down that whole, you know, tension and that whole sensitivity around, you know, I know a lot of white people who are very afraid to call me a black man. What's wrong with it, its not degrading, I'm black. OK, I'm male, OK I'm a big, OK so I'm a big black male, you know what I mean, you know you wanna break those stereotypes, that's what the Y-Culture is about. Its about people that love the same things, you know, do u like hip-hop, do you like house music, do you like kwaito, do you like the stuff we talk about, hey, you like where we hasg, and you know do the things we do, we're free, you know. Its not, you know, a culture that segregates if anything it's a culture that unifies, it's a culture that says 'lets unite by being real about ourselves and about each other and about our environment' as opposed to basically going through what many companies have gone through. I mean if you look at us as a company, you know, we're a post-apartheid company so my appointment as general manager was not out of, you know, black empowerment, it was really because I was the right guy for the job. As opposed to many other environments where companies that have been around for years and years and years, have had to go through, you know, kind of change to a large extent, you know, some people actually deserve the opportunities to be there, you know, but somewhere, you know, the influence of that is a bit different and heeds different results, what does it mean.
GF: You know it's interesting, out of everyone I've interviewed you are the only one who has mentioned the race thing without me having asked you. It's all about being young, it doesn't get mentioned, yet it's a sensitive dodgy subject still.

GM: But its also, you spoke to Lindi and Dineo, who are not that much, but are slightly younger than me, which tells you just how we all see the world. I still see South Africa as two countries cos I've lived in two countries you know, and, you know most people who are, I don't know, twenty-eight and under they couldn't be bothered, yes there are still things that are happening, but a lot of people kind of now start to see things beyond race- when you're interacting with other people. And like I said the good thing about Y is that we've actually never experienced any sort of racial tension even amongst the staff. I mean I have people older than me who are white who reporting to me and older people who are black reporting to me and everybody is happy. You know because the work environment is awesome, there are no issues about, in fact the most influential people in this company are young. I've got a guy who's exactly my age, who is a white guy who you know runs our entire sales division which is the most extremely, and he and I are like a team I mean everybody else whose older look at us like we're troublesome young boys, you know what I mean. He'd be another interesting guy to talk to. He's also has a very interesting outlook on life as well, you know, the type of guy who really reflects what urban young people are about, or what they should be about. So yeh, I could go to town explaining the Y-Culture, and what it is and what it stands for, but in a nutshell that's what it is. It goes to territories that are touchy for most people, it embraces positive change, it embraces a positive mindset, it embraces an energy, it embraces being real, it embraces all you know things that have to do with progressive young people no matter where they are or who they are.

GF: Why Joburg as the site for this explosion and specifically the Zone?

GM: Well why Joburg, I suppose I can take it back to day one, which is really the 'gold rush'. That's where the influence comes from. You know the entire event spectrum that changed the social fabric of this country came from it. If you look at people who have become very significant in any circle had to leave, you know, their original birthplace to be in a stage where you can be seen and heard. If you look at what Soweto means to a lot
of people so it was such a stage - Soweto is Joburg really, you know. Nelson Mandela, I doubt, would’ve been the icon that he is today had he still been in Mchunu. You know, neither would Bishop Tutu, neither would Bantu Holomisa, you know what I mean. It evolved to be stage to be heard from and I think a whole new culture was born cos, u know, people sort of united in this area. And even though, you know, in forty-eight when apartheid was instituted and you know you had the group areas act, and people moved to different areas and grew up in various different zones and stuff, you know, the essence of it being a real urban area did not die. You know, it remained even with the separation, that whole fabric that tied people together kind of still remained. You know cos Sophiatown for example was a very multiracial society, you know, so you find a scenario where Johannesburg became very significant at that particular time, you know, so as much as Rio De Janeiro has been vibrant as a city where young people from all over Brazil came together, or a city like London where, you know, you can’t exactly be significant and be in Brixton, you kind of have to move to where its happening. So I suppose for Johannesburg the need for a voice that reflected young people in that very significant space, arose from... Rosebank was actually later in our lives, we started off in Bez Valley in a little area called Bertrams, which for me, you know, was the right kind of environment for a brand like ours to start, you know, cos it reflected everything about young people especially young black people in a sense that, you know, we’ve all come from very humble and sometimes poor beginnings. And it reflects, you know, the exodus of young people generally, in that you always wanna be better than our beginnings. I suppose even for kids that get born in Sandton, you know, because that’s sort of the standard of your birth you actually wanna grow-up and buy a villa, do you know what I mean. If I had to take an odd example, Donald Trump grew up in a thirteen or was it a twenty-six room mansion but still achieved way much more than, you know, his initial upbringing, whereas where he started, you know, could be something that some one else aspires to. To me it’s a description of any sort of fabric of society, we always in packing orders, we’re always in certain levels and layers. Take away the race, everything else, the crap and the bullshit, it’s the same kind of thing it, you know it’s the same kind of matrix, the formula is the same thing. So its incumbent on young people in a specific area because they are the driving force to say, you know, lets recognize a situation for what it
is and not for, you know, what’s convenient. So, you know that’s really what is interesting about this area, so moving to Rosebank was, both from the fact that our company was growing and the building we were in could not sustain the number of people, what’s interesting is, you know, we started looking around and we actually didn’t have Rosebank in our sights. Some of our other choices, which are very typically YFM, the one building was actually opposite the SABC, what we wanted to do was put a skylight with the Y logo and at night just shine it on, it would have been nice, you know what I’m saying! And we thought ‘Hey, let’s buy this building just for that’. And our other site included, you know, the top of the Carlton Centre, which at the time, I mean, you know, the flavour in town was not as hip as now, but you know we saw that coming. But believe it or not it was very difficult to get into those places it was actually a lot easier to come into Rosebank, which was very surprising to us. When we came to Rosebank specifically, it was kind of very ‘old-Jewish-tannie-land’, Sandton was the flavour where all the young and hip were and we came here, you know we are part of a huge change that actually transformed this area, you know, cos it started to take a different kind of shape, and now you sit at Primi Piatti, and half the people that I meet with, you know, especially guys, they’re like ‘how do you work here’. Cos it looks like one long ramp. We’ve kind of made it, you know, our home, the home of young people in this area as well.

GF: In terms of the whole ‘ideal target audience’, I know it is young people fundamentally, but can’t you go a bit more than that?

GM: You know we’ve always never wanted to box ourselves, which is the same argument we take to marketers. The biggest mistake is you know, I’ll take one look at you and make a bunch of assumptions, based on dress etc- ah she’s into hip-hop, a bit of rock- bullshit, talk to me, ask me what I want, what do I listen to, what do I like, bow old I am and so forth, and then make up your own story about what I am and what I do as opposed to kind of throwing a blanket over a 16-24 year-old and see if they all do this, or 25-35 and say they all do this, you know. But then you get forced to kind of come up with some kind of ‘what is your ideal listener’, and if you had to look at them in age they’re probably sitting between 20-30, you know. But for me if you’re 35 years-old and
you like house music and you’re like what the hell, you can be forty, you know. If you like what we do and you still feel at home and you listening, moving from Mariam Makeba to Proverb and Simphiwe Dana, and trying to understand what that means you know and you read the articles and you find that you know, there’s depth in terms of how you write. It’s not just young, styled, famous, having a good time, you know, and some of the other content that we carry-on the station, you know. I mean, one of the most interesting things we do I think is the fact that we’ve got poetry, you know, you wouldn’t think of having poetry on an urban music station. In the States, this formula, people think ‘what the hell are these guys doing?’ because you are a Hip-Hop radio station and you play hip-hop the entire day, you know, rotate the same song fifty times and move-on, that’s the formula, you know, there are five other YFM’s in the region of Johannesburg, you know. So, it’s all about competition, you know. We’re in a unique position, in that you know, we’re still all about culture and you know, and also, I think, opening up opportunities for other forms of media to exist, you know. I think that if at some stage we evolve to a scenario where you have maybe a small you know, signal radio station that does poetry. You know what I mean, we’ve always been at the forefront of creating new movements and new genres, and I’m actually wrong by saying creating but rather innovating and you know, giving them the platform, you know. If you look at, you know, the South African style of hip-hop you know, we had a show many years ago called the ‘Rap-Activity Jam’, people used to think ‘guys, what the hell are you doing just coming in and rapping’, you know, just listen to what these guys have to say. Today, we’ve got, I mean Skwatta Kamp came through on the Rap-Activity Jam, Mischief came through on the Rap-Activity Jam, a whole lot of guys came through. So its quite interesting to see all of those artists, that we’ve always been able to see these things and expose them, and turn them into consumable cultures and things you can experience as well. You know I’ve always wondered what Ragga was about, and now you here Admiral and Appleseed at night on a Sunday.

GF: And by making it consumer culture, meaning really exposing it to the masses.

GM: Yes, you know, exactly, and it’s all about exposure really.
GF: The relationship between YMAG and YFM- there is a gap, personally listening to the station I find incredibly on the pulse, it’s happening, reading the magazine, there is also a gap, although the article content is good and insightful, but the gap between that and ‘your top ten lip-glosses’ is big. Can you comment on that as well, the content of the articles is what Y-Culture for me is about, but then you can’t ignore that people also want your ‘top ten lip-glosses’. How do you deal with this?

GM: It’s not perfect, you know, I think when you are trying to, you know, drive a certain ideal, you kind of take certain knocks and losses along the way and as your brand evolves, you know, you start to get into some of the mainstream styles and stuff that people wanna read about, you know. We had a meeting, for example, the other day and a lot of the best selling magazines in the world have three words on them all the time, you know, that can be 1 sentence, Win Free Sex, you know. That’s a formula for many magazines around the world, and you know, we never actually hardly have that on our cover, and you know, some of the other mainstream copy styles of things, because you know the feeling was that everybody else, that has a lot of coverage. You know, you switch on MTV you’ll see stuff like that, you switch on MTV BASE now these days, which is not different. You know you read any mags, you go to SL you go to HEAT, you go to People Mag, whatever, you know the feeling is that its all the same thing, you know, people doing it in their own flavour, you know. ‘Should we be doing it?’ Maybe, you know, and I think we’ll do it only when we are able to do it from our perspective. And when someone like you who has experienced the brand and who understands it from cover to cover, and you can come back and say ‘you can actually do this, and this is how you can do it’ you know. Cos we feed off a lot on the people that consume our brand as opposed to kind of thinking you know ‘we know everything’ we put out the content, you know.

GF: What I’m talking about is that if people want to see fashion they’ll buy Elle and if they wanna see the top ten lip-glosses they’ll buy Cosmo. but for me that is what makes YMAG really interesting is that is kind of hovers between these two position of quality reading stuff and frivolous mass stuff. This is where the theory of hybridity comes in and
it, talk to me about it, if you want me to try show me the respect, incest in me, you come across cos a two
I'm not seen as a P, Cos a two
I was not seen as a P, I'm not seen as a potential market, when I look at the figures you haven't
I mean come on.

Oh ok, now there is a whole kind of huge group of you, guys with all this disposable income etc, they've kind of jumped on the bandwagon and the market is resuming

that cos 'excuse me who's talking to me, who is advertising for me, nobody, only now I get invites but a year ago I was not seen as a potential market, when I look at the figures you haven't

bro into this. I'm thinking 'my young student market,' or even your
counterparts is totally different, You know what I'm thinking, we sort of began to talk about our two years ago with
even advertising didn't speak to black people generally, I mean come on. Even in that
traditionally, you know, from an economic space and even from a segregation space.
know. Largely some marketers don’t have the luxury to do that frankly, you know, because at the end of the day this is about money this is about marketing, but real life and real culture and everything else, you know is beyond all of that, its beyond stats its beyond boxes. Its incredible, between all the spreadsheets and graphs and all the smart concepts. By the time you finished the graph it’s changed!
Appendix 2.1: Harambe 26/08/2003

Disc 1, Track 3

Lee: Hello Rastafari!
Sanzu: More Fire! Fire Still!
L: Fire still my brother!
S: Yes, how was the traffic update?
L: The traffic?
S: It was quite nice. I was able to get people from the far north to the south where they live and get people from the township to cruise in that ship to town cos one day there’ll be water and those that are rushing to the airport..
L: Like Thomas!
S: You know!
L: Thomas you know what you are always late, you hold up planes just get yourself on that plane.
S: Party boy, remember when I hugged you goodbye I must of stuck my hand in your pocket. So watch out, (Lee laughs) empty your pockets before you are not allowed to cross over these shores mChina!
L: Thomas don’t worry, in that country you are allowed to take a lot of sand and water with you.
S: No no take it from your hand into your mouth but into your pocket yeh? Yeh!
L: (laughs) Rasta what’s happening with the sports today?
S: No sister in sports… you… do we not have competitions today?
L: Yeh man!
S: Do we? Is there a lot of money?
L: For sure!
S: So people who are driving should maybe be coming past Rosebank to pick up their prizes and all hey?
L: Something like that!
S: I think it's the truth that we've been in Cape Town I haven't caught up with what's happening in the art activities, you know, but we still thinking that radio hasn't done enough justice to review the past weekend's sporting and art activities and reviews as such. The US Open has been happening since yesterday, Amanda Coetzee and Jeff Coetzee, or Amanda and Jeff Coetzee, they're not a couple, probably cousins (puts on Afrikaans accent), from South Africa, they're actually from Mzansi (Lee reiterates 'cousins' in Afrikaans accent). The World Athletic Championship in Paris, Jacques Vrytig (sings in Afrikaans accent) already digging gold for Mzansi in the men's high-jump, this time around the gold is coming to the people (says something in Black language and then laughs). The Boks rugby world cup hopefuls, they're training camp in Tswana, its no longer Pretoria, I think the only thing you know, we need to change the mind-set guys! Its no longer called Pretoria, they've put so much money to try and change the name and its our moneys and forget-
L: (interrupts) Can I just say something?
S: Remember we are still paying for the apartheid debt, you know, our government, so lets not waste our money.
L: You know what the thing about all these name changes, like I understand and its very important you know because obviously names like that had bad historical connotations or whatever, its just that people are wasting money on changing the names of streets and everything when we have like other problems!
S: Lee don't you think we're wasting money paying the apartheid debt? We didn't cause it!? So other things are necessary!
L: (interrupts) No, Sanza, money can go into stuff like education, you know what I mean and that sort of thing!
S: (interrupts) Okay, lets say then that the money from the bridge (Nelson Mandela bridge) should have gone into education, but you were still on the bridge for Madiba's birthday and the bridge opening, so I mean don't be a hypocrit!
L: Where you there? (says accusingly) Sanza you are there! (in background) I have photos, I have photos!
S: I went to walk cos I'm a pedestrian, its my tax money! I didn't go cos I'm celebrating!
L: Okay, Sanza don't attack me! Thomas, you see!
S: Okay, guys it's happening in Pretoria, the loose forward, Schalk Burger, you remember from the Western Province, Cape Town (puts on Afrikaans accent), he's coming all the way to Pretoria, to T-S-W-A-N-E. Thabang Libisi he is still without a club (soccer). Xolela baba Kazier Chiefs Xolela. I think that's the best time he had the best combination, remember that 'Thabo-thiba Thabang' combination. Remember back in the day in Kazier Chiefs there used to be a teenage... ‘go-man-go’ combination? Even at Pirates there was that... who said 'ok if you don't know what to do with the ball give it to Bashin!' (Lee laughs in background) We need that you know. Thabang Libisi must find a job, I think he's young and he's in football and you know how much they get in football, they don't have degrees you know unless they've been to the cyber village at Kazier Chiefs then they can have an outside career you know, in case they don't kick the ball, you know. Otherwise, we're making heroes out of our stars. Shoes Moshosho. I think is my highlight this week in terms of activities, you know at this age and he's still scoring goals- he gave up a good 'Turkish delight' kind of living in football career that was hyping to one of the top teams in South Africa, but I mean what is a top team in South Africa's kind of like PSL (says mockingly)... Fire!

L: Alrighty, my side of the show, we've got the Shoprite competition coming through, what you need to do is call us 8800992 on the Joburg code, I'm still stuck on that because of Cape Town, but anyway...

S: (interrupts) 0-2-1 (in a 'Coloured' accent to which Lee imitates).

L: Huh! For sure 0-2-1 B-boys what's up? (Both her and Sanza laugh). Call us and all you need to do is come up with a rap or sing something that has the lyrics 'It's our birthday, its your party, lower prices you can trust always'. Its that easy R500 and then you can walk away with R2000 (Sanza reiterates: Boom!) and then R10000, its that easy! Also you know that its SA music week, well at least you should...

S: (interrupts) That's my voice, you can here, I'm the only SA voice!

L: (cuts him short) Moving right along! (Sanza says in backround: O-K!), We're gonna be having a chat with Shaheen from Bush Radio, um, yesterday we spoke to the general manager of Media Trust, Rosie Katz and she spoke about how the theme this year is 'Education, Careers in Music'. Tonight we're gonna be chatting to one of SA's hip-hop
legends, not just locally but internationally as well, not just as an emcee but as an activist and educator, Shaheen is off the hook!

S: (interrupts) Ek se Mamelah!...

L: We’ll find out exactly how we put hip-hop into education when we chat to Shaheen. And also we’re gonna be giving away 5 5 5 tickets to people. What’s going to happen is 5 people are gonna call in and walk away with tickets to the Bad Boys 2 premiere and they can take 4 friends.

S: 4 friends?

L: Yeh for sure!

S: Ok 5 5’s?

L: 5 5.

S: 5 times 5?

L: 5 5 5.

S: 5 times 5?

L: Holler! (affirms)

S: Like 25 people will be going inside? Done!

L: Thanks, thanks for the maths lesson (she says this mockingly)!
Appendix 2.2- Harambe 26/08/2003
Disc 2. Track 3 and Track 4 up to 2:24

Soundbyte of Thandiswa Maswai: As young South Africans this is the music that defines us, its hip-hop its kwato its house music its jazz its everything, I mean we are global people in South Africa, you know. Everytime we make music we rely on the fact that this is where we come from, therefore we’re just gonna give that out.

Lee: Alrighty, its South African music week, we’re having a chat with Shaheen, yesterday we did have a chat (is interrupted by Sanza’s whistling). Sanza, what are you doing?
Sanza: Didn’t you here that Sunday song? The Chiskop song, come on now?
L: Yes, I did I did I did, but I’m not understanding?
S: Okay, overstanding!
L: Anyway its South African music week. Yesterday we had a chat with Rosie Katz who is the general manager of Media Trust. The theme is this year ‘Eductaion, Careers in Music’. Tonight we’re chatting to a legend in South African hip-hop locally and globally, not just as an emcee but as an educator through the workshops he’s had here and overseas but also through his radio programme and other activities that he’s been part of where they’ve helped to take hip-hop to various communities, prisons, using hip-hop as an educational tool. It is our pleasure ...
S: SHAHeEEEEN!
L: Shaheen, how are you?
Sh: Hey, how you guys doin?
L: Cool man!
Sh: I really didn’t deserve that, man (laughs)!
L: Didn’t you?
S: That was little, that was just a caption of what Lee has written about you! Lee has got a whole study about you, you know.
L: First of all big-up and thank you very much for joining us Shaheen.
Sh: Anytime, anytime.

S: Cousin, there’s been mixed feelings, do you think that we should still commemorate, celebrate or maybe use one of the terms when it comes to the programme of SA music week? What should we do? What should we call what we do for South African music during this time?

Sh: Hey, it’s tricky because I do think it’s necessary to celebrate and acknowledge, you know, South African music and musicians, and their contributions and I do think it’s necessary to have kind of the workshops that they’re having at the moment. I think it’s extremely important. But I really really don’t get a feeling and I don’t feel convinced that the industry is really making a concerted effort to support local artists.

S: (agrees) Yaah! I’m feeling that! I’m feeling it!

Sh: You know, there is a lot of exploitation still happening, um in fact a lot of local artists whether its jazz or whatever music, people are encouraged to follow formulas because at the end of the day its about sales, you know. And they push this thing about artistry and musicianship and very seldom that gets pushed on the backburner cos units need to be moved- I think that’s the one thing. Another thing is that audiences should be made aware of the music that they purchase cos for me the saddest thing, me personally, is that the way view music and consume music has been totally depoliticized. And people don’t see something like a Britney Spears or whoever as making a political statement and very often Britney Spears might not even be aware of making a political statement. (Sanza and Lee agree). But it is, its mainstream politics, its creative capitalism, its going with the flow. And then you have your occasional Dead Prez (thought to be an almost militant and political hip-hop crew from America) who says something and automatically that’s deemed as political, when all music is political. (Sanza staunchly agrees)

L: Whether they realize it or not.

Sh: And I think audiences don’t always understand that, you know, all of us all of us. Because if you’re gonna spend bucks, a lot of people are complaining about Bush and what they (Americans) are doing in the world and whatever, but we’re buying US records, and we’re buying (using) our hard earned cash supporting multinationals and all these companies who are basically exploiting Africa and the rest of the world and the poor. (Sanza affirms: Wow, wow!!). And people need to make sound decisions around
that and that’s one of my problems. Another personal thing is that I also think that locally especially because not a lot of time and energy and money goes into artist development. Um, musicians should be informed about the world that they live in, you know (Lee agrees) and I’ve said this before as well and I’m gonna sound like a broken record—very often people don’t understand the amount of killing that’s involved in making a song. You know, trees are being cut down for inner sleeves of records. Part of the bloody rainforest is dying because your album is coming out, you know. Kids are being killed in the Middle-East because of oil deals going sour (Sanza agrees) in order to make plastic for vinyls and CD covers and whatever. So killing is involved in order for you to create something and very very often...

S: (interrupts) We somehow kill our political idols, I think your right. Some of them have used music as a platform to criticize and you know, coming from the politics that is shown on CNN, and we’re dissing it, the African culture in terms of politics, and we really don’t know what the bigger picture is all about, and people use all that time, you know, perpetuating the whole mediocrity within politics, you know the whole mediocre political point of view, when we should be unearthing our different types of politics, when we should be talking about how we interpret what is so called politics or political instabilities or the civil rights, you know all that, or the, you know, the Mugabes and all of that. I even heard youngsters come up with their own interpretations of what’s really happening in the southern hemisphere through music.

L: Or even just creating an awareness of what’s really going on, you know what i mean?
Sh: I think people should just be allowed to express themselves on their own terms and also it should be somehow informed (Sanza agrees: Wow!). I think, that’s just my personal opinion. It is a school of thought, you know, I’m not saying that whatever, that it should be something that is followed or whatever, this is just my view from when I was involved.

S: Ek se mamela!

L: Now Shaheen can I just jump in right there. Education is not just a key of success its also a means of communicating to people who’re around you and as a tool of, you know, sharing what’s going on (Shaheen agrees: No. doubt!). Hip-hop also has that potential, now you guys out in Cape Town, I always I always say about how the Cape Town hip-
n hop scene - much much love- you guys are going out to the communities and you do school projects. Can you give us a little bit of information as to how you guys impact the different schools and use hip-hop as an educational tool, cos I remember how you were saying about how you guys go out to the prisons as well?

S: Well, um since the get go I think, like I think people like myself, like Emile and a couple of others, since the 1980’s we saw the potential, and experienced the potential of hip-hop outside just, you know, kicking rhymes and etc. as a tool to communicate very important ideas. That’s the one thing, I think what we’ve managed to do, is that I’m extremely fortunate to work with like-minded people, people who are genuinely concerned about their communities that are not so concerned about whether its hip-hop or whether it’s a particular genre or whether it’s a particular vehicle. Is he genuinely concerned about his communities, if its pottery if its planting, if its whatever, he will do it. And I think I’ve just been very fortunate to move in circles with people that are concerned about the community but are hip-hop heads as well. So sure there are workshops you know, through radio, through radio training, through demystifying radio. I think that’s also a huge problem in South Africa is that television, well the media in general is something that’s not very accessible to people so when people call in or engage with the media its about giving shout outs or calling in for competitions (Lee affirms: Exactly!) and they don’t feel that media isn’t this think that’s up there, you know, media is human beings communicating with human beings, its not an objective, removed system or thing. You know, and I think that’s also part and parcel of the problem and I think that I’ve been fortunate to move with like-minded people to demystify the media, So I just feel fortunate, I don’t think that we’re doing good stuff, I think that we’re doing necessary stuff.

S: I think we’re doing necessary stuff, I think we’re living in the most interesting times. Cousin, I know you are doing good work at Bush FM, that side, Bush Radio in Cape Town, you know what YFM is all about here, and the SA music week programme, that they’re gonna be busying kids from the schools and bringing them here, you know, Sha, I know you’ve been involved with taking the education and taking the whole art form, you know, cos lets not lose the art of it you know, cos sometimes kids might be running away from it saying ‘we’re preaching we’re preaching’. What about the art you know that fun
level where we take hip-hop as an art form with its educational content into the schools, what should be the approach here, we should not only do it when we’re here, what should be the approach with school kids, what is it that they can try and organize from their schools, how can they try learn, prepare themselves to learn before the SA music week’s programme, because they’re being brought to town to you know come and break-down this art form called hip-hop and some called kwaito, you know and other different art-forms that are embraced this week, but what should be the approach from youngsters?

Sh: Well its about trying to narrow it down to one question. I guess, first of all, I don’t think being aware of politics means you have to be preachy, (Sanza agrees: Ya!) in fact I think that the best communicated political ideas are the ones that aren’t preachy, for me personally, because it can become either corny or condescending when it becomes preachy, so I don’t necessarily view being politically aware with corniness or preachy.

And ! also don’t think that it should be at the expense of artistry or mastering a particular skill whether it’s a rhyme structure or flow or production or whatever. I think that a perfect marriage is possible and should be possible that’s why its art. The problem that I have is that very often especially genres like hip-hop, its divorced from its edge, its divorced from the more revolutionary side, and for young people just to know that when they listen to music a political statement is made, it doesn’t matter what music it is a political statement is made, it depends on what side of the political fence... and that’s a good place to start, because then you’ll start listening critically to music and engaging with art critically as well and not just as something that I do on the weekends to chill and then the rest of life happens (Sanza agrees: Wow, wow, wow!).

L: Now Shaheen, before we let you go how do think it can happen that there can be a total balance particularly say in the hip-hop industry in South Africa which is growing, hopefully, where you have the education in check and you have the business in check and the emcees in check and the whole art in check.

S: (interrupts) And the whole art in its most ripe and its most fresh.

L: What do you think needs to happen in your opinion?

Sh: Hey man this is like debates that we have constantly with heads all-over the world. I think the one thing is if we start not viewing hip-hop, at least- hey I’m sounding judgemental here- ok, for me personally, I think that we should expand the boundaries of
hip-hop, we shouldn’t just look at it as emceeing, djing or whatever, there should be people with organizational skills, people that are doctors, lawyers or whatever and um, educators. And once we view, you know, that hip-hop shouldn’t be placed in these 4 little boxes that’s now this element that becomes soumbytes for everyone, then its possible to expand, then its possible to have people that understand economics, people that understand art, people that understand politics, people that understand the need to educate and be educated as well cos I think very often a lot of us because there is such a lot to do that is necessary we put ourselves in the position of educator when we have such a lot to learn (Sanzu agrees: Wow! I’m feeling that). And for me personally like when I’ve been called an educator, and I know its meant with the best intentions, I feel uneasy adopting that because I’ve got such a lot to learn myself you know.

S: I’m feeling that, I’m feeling that, the humble approach.

Sh: But I think it is important for emcees as well to not just sit the whole day and write rhymes and become this dope emcee, we need to become dope human beings as well.

S: And more socially active, fire, more socially active, Rasta! I’m feeling that you know!

L: Shaheen, I’ve never heard Sanza this happy I promise you (she says laughing).

S: No because he crosses the boundaries, you know. You know Shaheen I had a problem you know, you go to the gigs, you know, and the ‘niggaz’, the brothers (Lee laughs) are bopping heads you know and they’ve got their hoodies (track tops with hoods) and some of us look like we don’t belong, and I’m trying to say there is a global culture but there is American colonization and to me (Shaheen agrees: Totally!) what I’m saying here is I’ve seen Japanese kids in hip-hop and they look more hip and they look Japanese and they look like Jackie Chang like you know, cos it’s natural, you know (Lee laughs), cos you come to South Africa or you come to Rosebank and then you see some heads and you know, its not Brooklyn here man!

L: Shaheen, on that light note I guess (packs out laughing with Sanza) thanks so much for joining us. Big up once again to what you guys are doing out there, yeh, we’ll stay in touch!

Sh: Cool!

S: Bush!

L: Sanza you’re crazy! (Laughs)
Sh: Peace, take it easy guys!
L: Peace man!
Sh: Ok bye.
Appendix 2.3- Harambe 26/08/2003
Disc 3 Track 4 (from 3:56)

Lee: That’s Moodphase Five in the back, Naked DJ’s coming through and I think he is gonna play an all local mix in celebration of South African Music Week. Hey Q?

Naked: That was yesterday girl!

Lee: Oh, so you only doing it for one day?

N: No, I will play-

L: So, our artist are only worth your one day?

N: No, you know-

L: I’m just asking-

N: You know all my music got jacked-

L: (interrupts him) Say ‘yes’ or ‘no’, say ‘yes’ or ‘no’, ‘yes or ‘no’

N: Lee, come on, I thought we sorted things out in Cape Town?

L: Q, say ‘yes’ or ‘no’, (speaks to Sanza) Sure Sanza, sure Rasta, look how Sanza’s doing it, (speaks to Naked) say ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

N: Hey man all my local stuff got jacked, you know that, you know, but I will put in some local tracks here and there. (All the while Lee is ‘umming’ and sighing as if she doesn’t believe him).

L: So you’re compromising them.

N: What?

L: You gonna compromise the movement! Sanza must come and help me. (Speaks to Sanza) Sanza, he’s compromising the movement, and you heard what Shaheen said to day Rasta? Come Sanza, come tell him, come school him. We gonna wait for Sanza, dead end everything, done!

N: (says frustratedly) Eish, ok, whatever.

L: Ya! Sanza? He’s gonna compromise the-

S: (Sanza interrupts) Naked apparently you only lost 10 CD’s in Cape Town-

N: (interrupts) Who said 10?
S: (interrupts) So where’s your Brenda Fassie, where’s your Yvonne (Chaka Chaka), your Sinyaka, he’s hip-hop? Let me not expose you (everyone laughs)! How much music, you’ve probably got about 25 international albums, how much money is that?
L: (agrees) Yeh, Q, and so if you lost only 10 CD’s, nevermind-
S: (interrupts) You lost only 10 local CD’s-
N: Who said only 10? Oh, so now you know the person that stole them! (Everyone is talking at the same time)
L: How many did you lose?
S: And now your mix is gonna be diluted.
L: How many did you lose?
N: I, ch, I…
L: How many did you lose?
N: I lost my whole CD carrier!
N: It was 30 or something.
L: 30?
S: You lost only 10!
L: You’re such a liar!
N: (shouts defensively) I’ve got unreleased stuff as well!
L: Tell me how many did you lose Q?
N: I lost a whole lot!
L: Tell us! He lost 5-
N: (interrupts) Oh so are their only 5 local artists?
L: No, I’m just asking, why does the Naked DJ… (gets interrupted by Sanza)
S: You’re naked not local… the nearer culture, its far from Johannesburg at the airport.
L: Naked, you’re a disappointment!
N: All, right, ok.
S: But Lee, why don’t you give him some Ugandan rap?
L: Huh? its South African music week love.
S: Well at least its Africa.
L: its SA music week.
S: But Naked is gonna jump all the way to Brooklyn! (All laugh)
L: He’s gonna go to Brooklyn, not even via anywhere, just straight to Brooklyn!
S: Strait to the brown bricks of Brooklyn!
L: HuH!
S: (make reference to P.Diddy in an African language to which everyone packs out laughing).
L: Naked, he (Naked) should be ashamed!
AD BREAK
L: Now, usually we’d have the Naked DJ on but now he says he doesn’t wanna play anymore because now he is under pressure (puts on a baby voice). Q, stop being a baby!
Dude, I will play local hip-hop and I will make you look bad, just go do what you’re meant to be doing. And stop going through Thomas’s case (of vinyl records) in his absence. Just go, go! And you’re cutting you’re time short, you’re lucky, cos now you can play all the 3 CD’s that you have (she says this sarcastically)! What?
N: Can I start? Can you just keep quite so and let me mix!
L: Can I keep quiet?
N: Yes, and let me mix!
For the rest of the track he mixes local hip-hop. There is a soundbyte introducing him which has a recorded voice over music, which is his mother talking about how growing up Naked Dî would use his lunch money to buy vinyl records. She describes this in by mixing English with a local Black language. She says, “you were paving the way for yourself, I’m proud of you son, and you’re going places. To me you’re not ‘the Naked one’ but you’re fully clothed. You’re still my little boy, I love you”.

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Y mag

Yona Ke Yona

Fashion Show

Cape Town Fashion Week
18 August 2004
THE YMAG SHOW

1. YSTYLE INTRO
2. LIFE BY ANDRE MARTIN
3. MAGENTS
4. STONED CHERRIE

Jodi Slinson
Stylist
YMAG Show

MUSIC scored by DJ Fresh. Models supplied by Cape Town Fashion Week.
YMag leads the trends in Afro cool and youth culture lifestyle. It represents the energy and vitality that pulsate behind South African urban society. YMag's fashion reflects progressive images and supports entertainment and various genres of the overall Y brand. The YMag expression is a combination of various brands with in-your-face individuality and makes its mark as a true reflection of today's urban culture movement - the young and wild at heart, cutting-edge, street-smart global, yet purely African and individualistic.

The editorials and features are fashion-dynamic with an emphasis on real people, new talent and the "next big thing" to hit the scene. The youth of Mzansi now look to YMag for fashion, entertainment and lifestyle trends.

"YMag's mission is to celebrate urban culture by documenting its freshness, sophistication and newness within an unconventional magazine style.

YMag thanks
Clothing: STRANGE LOVE, TERENCE CLAYTON BRAY, KAREN MONK KNYSTRA, AMANDA LAIRD CHERRY, LEVI'S CUSTOMISED BY DARKLE, TRUWORTHS, PUMA, THE SPACE, GIDEON AND SOVIET. Accessories and Shoes: LUXOTICA EYEWEAR, SWAROVSKI, TRUWORTHS, EUROPA ART, FOOTWEAR TRADING AND CAMPER."
The Magents brand started in the mid 90's and comprises of THE CREW - DD, Tshepo, Trev, Meshack, and Tshifo. The brand caters for a certain group of individuals that have the ability to rise above their culture and other walls in society. Individuals who live a lifestyle that can be placed anywhere around the globe and immediately blend in with a similar group in that particular culture.

They do not live according to race, colour, or creed, but rather realize that there are other individuals in other precincts that are exactly the same. Mostly they find and recognize each other within and through the fashion, music and lifestyle they enjoy.

Magents lifestyle apparel is South African based but is available in selected retail stores, including the YShoppe at the Zone in Rosebank, in Europe and soon in the USA. The person who wears the brand is mostly one that has a higher level of consciousness than the normal man on the street. They are leaders in their fields and ahead of global culture.

The company launched the Magents vision apparel through optometrists nationwide. This has proved to be very successful. Again we have chosen only the finest manufacturers in Italy to manufacture the sunglasses and reading glasses.
"My Cherrie" means "my woman" in township slang.

Stoned Cherrie, a home grown super-brand expressing afro-urban culture was established 4 years ago by Nkhensani Manganyi and a design collective.

The brand affirms itself through the idea of boldly moving forward, daring to be different and daring to be proud to be African, making it a unique African-urban brand.

Stoned Cherrie collections are a rampant celebration of South African street culture – a celebration of freedom. The gear is feminine and vibrant – resonating individualism through tactile sensations, colours and shapes.

The Stoned Cherrie wardrobe embodies an expression of the street smart soul. The designs have advanced so much that they now produce for retail stores, Woolworths and Stuttafords, in addition to their flagship store in Rosebank.
YMag supports entrepreneurship in youth culture and producing the show is a part of its corporate social investment strategy.

YMag is the winner of Best Consumer Magazine from the Sappi MPASA Pica Awards 2002 and Best Youth Publication for 2005 and 2003 respectively. Earlier this year, YMag was awarded a Monde Magazine Awards for Excellence for the Best Article in the Foresight Category. The magazine was also nominated in the Fashion, Beauty, and Columns categories. YMag positioning is "Afro Chic" and remains the leading magazine for urban trendoids focusing on youth culture lifestyle. YMag's sales continue to growth within Mzansi and Southern Africa. YMag was established in 1998 and has been produced by YFM in-house since 2002.

According to Kim Thipe, YFM Marketing Director and Associate Publisher of YMag: "YMag continues to be both a visual and cultural component to the diversity of topics important to urban culture.

Like Yfm radio, "YMag caters for the young at heart, as youth is a state of mind and not a time of life. The overall project is a marketing case study in creating a media brand extension to a powerful mother brand, Yfm, and keeping publication in line with the overall brand intrinsics".

To keep in line with the content needs of our target market, Yfm OJ Leslie "Lee" Kasumba was appointed to edit the magazine, earlier this year. The magazine content thread centers on being proud to be in young, urban South Africa right here, right now and getting ahead in life against all odds for young adults. The primary focus is music, both old and new, covering new of the house music, kwaito, hip hop, R&B and dance genres extensively.

The two fashion editorials per issue are fashion forward with an emphasis on real people, new models and displaying aspects of the lifestyle culture in what’s breaking on the fashion scene. The beauty segments are unisex and focus on new faces and cover various aspect of the body. All other content is centered on what is relevant to our vibrant readers mainly in the entertainment lifestyle genre.

While the magazine does cover certain aspects of Yfm, it is an independent commercial publication, reporting on issues outside of Yfm, but targeted at the Yfm audience nationwide.

YMag contributors rotate and consist of some of the top urban writers in the country. YMag has entertainment icons who write on various topics as well as several first time writers. Some of the many contributors featured this year are Nthumeng Malabane, Kgaile oa Magagodi, Sophiwe Mope, Leigh Toselli, Steve Tanchel, Khanyi Magubane, Craig Jacobs and others.

According to Lee (pictured right) "It’s hard to trace the future face of fashion. Just when you think you are on top of things, the people in the street who ultimately shape fashion trends have changed it yet again. The YMag fashion team each year is proud to bring to the catwalk trends that are being set by the emerging urban youth every day.

This year is no exception. The designers that we’ve chosen are the epitome of the urban culture in Mzansi."

YMAG IS ABOUT CELEBRATING URBAN CULTURE AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE BIBLE OF YOUTH CULTURE IN MZANSI AND BEYOND.

According to Greg Maloka (pictured right), General Manager of Y said: "YMag is a great platform to use to talk to the urban youth market. We are looking forward to yet another fruitful year with our premier content driven publication - celebrating urban culture, fashion, entertainment, and trends of young adults and beyond."

Lindy Zokufa (pictured above), Brand Manager of Y said: "In this past year, YMag has gradually increased in both sales and client base. Advertising agencies together with clients are now starting to understand the Y Culture and are now realising that YMag is a great platform to use to talk to the urban youth market. We are looking forward to yet another fruitful year with our premier content driven publication - celebrating urban culture, fashion, entertainment, and trends of young adults and beyond."
Khwezi Tshabalala and Natalie Marsh (pictured left): Every brand aims to become so entrenched in its consumers' lives that it transcends its category. For example, Nike is about more than active apparel—it's about a lifestyle of adrenalin. And YMag is beyond a magazine—it's a virtual cultural manifesto.

YMag's Afro-chic positioning has made it the leading magazine for urban trends in the youth culture lifestyle. Since 1998, it has both documented and shaped the rise of Afropolitanism as Mzansi actively reimagines itself. The bi-monthly magazine is all about style, attitude and funk. Like its mother brand, Yfm, YMag has given a voice to the urban youth of South Africa. Its editorial mix includes fashion, music, lifestyle, personalities and opinion—produced from start to finish in Johannesburg. Its editorial team is headed by Leslie "Lee" Kasumba. It is designed by Yfm's advertising agency TBWA/Gavin Reddy.

"YMag is the platform for both new and established artists in Mzansi. We feature the best of Hip Hop, Kwaito, R&B, House music and much more. Our commitment to local music and its icons are showcased in YMag. We also have access to the best in international talent" says Iggy Smalliz, YMag's Music Editor (pictured far right).

"The magazine has a positive, celebratory style, whilst being urban, cutting edge and relevant. Its editorial and visual mix is glamorous, sophisticated, young and vibrant, supporting the publication’s Afro-chic positioning."

"YMag has been instrumental in documenting the urban lifestyle experience, with an emphasis on showcasing and discovering new talent in entertainment and the arts. The magazine has highlighted these achievers with the message that success is obtainable to anyone who truly believes.

YMag has featured many rising stars, in fashion spreads as well as editorially. YMag has also married the connection between fashion and entertainment. A series of photo shoots were done with top Hip Hop, Kwaito, and graffiti artists, dancers and poets around the country. Another winning attribute has been the magazine’s providing a platform for young designers to showcase their work.

YMag as a commercial brand extension is distributed nationally with about a 60% concentration in the Gauteng province. The radio station broadcasts live from the Zone in Rosebank in Johannesburg. The magazine is distributed nationwide through Woolworths, Pick 'n Pay, CNA, Exclusive Books and other retail outlets. Yfm has over 1.9 million radio listeners in Gauteng, but its audience extends to other provinces and internationally with the assistance of Channel 60 on DStV, and its website www.yworld.co.za.
DJ Fresh - as we have come to know Thato Sikwane - was born in 1972 in Gaborone, Botswana. News of auditions at Gauteng's hip station YFM reached him just a day to go before closing date but he went in on the day in 1997 and scooped the job. He couples as a radio presenter, club DJ, CD compiler and he is managing director of company Big Dawg Productions. He currently hosts YFM's popular breakfast show "Unrestricted" 06:00 -10:00, Mondays - Fridays.

Fresh has eight house albums under his belt. He has toured extensively in SA (alongside the likes of Lil' Louis Vega, Frankie Knuckles, Armand Van Helden, DJ Spade and OJ Spreadlove) and internationally as guest DJ at Southport (2000), and at Pacha in Ibiza (2001). In March 2002, DJ Fresh formed part of a team of SA DJs who attended and performed at the Masters at Work party at the Miami International DJ conference. He was the only DJ invited by the South African Embassy in Moscow to play during the SA celebrations in September of 2003. He continues to DJ worldwide and will host his radio show in Ibiza later this year.

In 2002 the scholarship attracted over 500 candidates from disadvantaged communities who were whittled down to 50 top students who were awarded the scholarships. Although there are no strings attached, DJ Fresh encourages the students, once they start work, to sponsor one deserving youth each as their contribution to nation building.

45 graduates from the Big Dawg scholarship and Y Cares bursaries successfully completed their studies in December 2003. In its three-year existence, the scholarship programme valued at over R5 million has taken over 50 deserving students to the next level of their educational development.

DJ Fresh's description of himself is "a young person on a mission to change the world, one person at a time, and not doing badly so far".

With everything that Thato Sikwane has done both as a radio presenter and young entrepreneur, he is after all "so far, not doing badly". One can only hope that he will still influence more people.